

Special Features This Issue

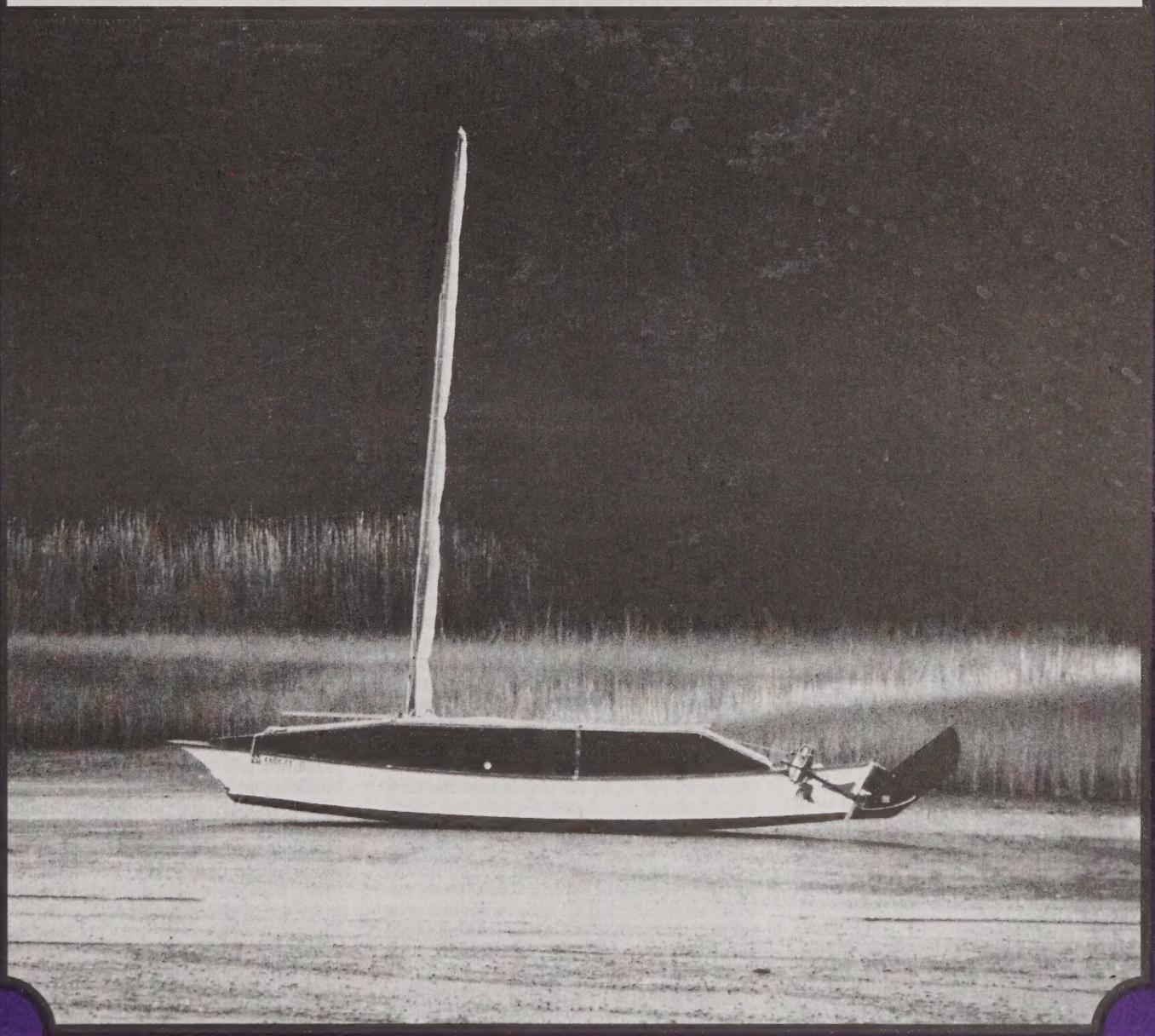
"Blackburn 2004" - "The Acadians Have Landed"
"Tribute to a Plywood Boat" - "Birdwatcher II"



messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 22 - Number 9

September 15, 2004



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On the Cover...

Birdwatcher at rest, the "beach" part of beach cruising. Phil Bolger has much to tell us in this issue about his favorite design.

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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor



The two people in the photo heading this page are Reinhard Zollitsch and your Editor. It was taken at the Blackburn Challenge in July. After talking about his experiences competing in the race, Reinhard and I got onto a topic of some significance to me and, as it turns out, to Reinhard also. I took the occasion of our meeting to tell Reinhard how much I appreciated the inclusion of cultural and historical information in his chronicles of his long distance paddling adventures. To me this sort of background about the places visited on any sort of cruise fills out the tale beyond the direct personal adventures encountered, or the detailing of the boat's performance.

I hasten to add that Reinhard is not alone in supplying such information, a number of others who have sent in cruising tales have been similarly interested in the nature of the places they visited and included such background. But Reinhard was right here in front of me so I could personally tell him how much I appreciated this. He obviously took it to heart because I'd hardly gotten back to work when I received the article published in this issue about the 400th anniversary of the first settlement in North America north of Florida, on the island of St. Croix in Maine's Passamaquoddy Bay in 1604. Reinhard went over to St. Croix to have a look around, just a short outing for this marathon paddler, and his story is mostly about the history of the place. Despite the absence of any personal boating experiences in his narrative, I decided to run it for the maritime aspects of the original settlers' experiences.

A number of years ago now (I did not look up exactly when) I serialized a book published in 1876, *The Voyage of the Paper Canoe* by Nathaniel Bishop. It chronicled Bishop's trip from the St. Lawrence River to Florida in a paper canoe built by the Waters firm in Troy, New York (see the August 15 issue for more on the Waters canoes). What fascinated me as much as Bishop's adventures afloat was his ongoing commentary about the people he met along the way, their lifestyles, and history. It was revelatory about the post Civil War south in particular. The fact that much of his southern route utilized the in-shore canals/rivers/bays the Confederacy connected up to avoid Union blockades made him pretty much an original recreational boater on the ICW, for that is how the ICW came to be.

I live in a history besotted part of the country, "Olde" New England, where we go back almost 400 years now, and so history has always been in my life. The schools saw to it that we learned all about what had gone on right here since the 1620s landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock (about 50 miles from us). The maritime aspects did not get major attention in those school years, but once I became interested in boats and the nearby

seacoasts, they became of increasing interest to me.

The nearest coast to me is on Salem Sound, about five miles away as the crow flies. It is a modest bay encompassed by the towns and cities of Manchester, Beverly, Salem, and Marblehead. Salem was a major colonial era seaport and, as a result, the bottom of Salem Sound is littered with over 100 known shipwrecks from Colonial to recent times. I wonder how many of the "boaters" on the 5,000 plus pleasure boats docked in these communities, who clog the Sound on sunny summer weekends, are aware of them, or what's down there beneath their keels?

I became very aware of them a number of years ago (I didn't look this one up either) when some of our local small craft club indulged in a sunny New Year's Day row out to Misery Island in the Sound from nearby Manchester. While paddling alongshore Misery at one point, our canvas-covered Rangeley Lake boat scraped over what proved to be a snag of a rib from a wreck nearly buried in the tidal sands, a wreck of a vessel sunk there in a storm in the 1920s. The rip let in some water so we were somewhat concerned, with that water at about 36 degrees. All was well but we had a firsthand experience with some local maritime history.

That same Misery Island is today held as open space by a Massachusetts open space trust, the Trustees of Reservations. It is open to the public but accessible only by boat. A seasonal caretaker is ashore daily to collect the modest fee (\$1, I think) to go ashore and look around. The ruins of its last iteration in the early 20th century as a summer colony of homes compete with a dance hall and all can be viewed. The colony was wiped out in a island fire in the 1920s and never rebuilt. The island's name is derived from an incident in the early 1800s when a vessel was wrecked on its shore in a winter storm and the survivors spent the rest of the winter trapped on the island unable to signal anyone ashore that they were there. Knowledge of what had transpired in the past adds for me to the mystique of going ashore there (we've been there a half dozen times).

Misery Island also has a anchorage sheltered from the winds from the east around to the southwest. Its relatively placid sea surface attracts hosts of weekend boaters whose boats spend their weekdays in marinas in nearby Beverly and Salem in particular. Giant rafts get organized on almost any nice weekend and it's party hearty time. They motor out the four or five miles from port and motor back at weekend's end. That appears to be the extent of their boating experience. Mobile waterfront property is how I view these craft. I wonder if many of the owners have any idea as to the history of this island that provides this protected hangout for their partying?

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EAST INDIA SQUARE

Next week I take off for Moosehead Lake. I will be staying at the Water Sailors up there for a week's worth of sailing. In preparation for the trip I ordered the Maine Atlas and Gazetteer from the DeLorme at P.O. Box 298, Yarmouth, Maine 04096, www.delorme.com. For those of you who love maps, DeLorme has published a series of these atlases of many U.S. states. They contain detailed quadrangular maps showing not only roads, but elevations and hiking trails. These are great for planning small boat adventures along streams and lakes. Hikers and bikers will also be happy with the detail.

I must tell you I am excited about the trip. One reason is there is a good chance we'll get close to some moose. I've seen a few at some distance, but nothing close up. This may be my big chance.

Moose are very large animals, the largest member of the deer family. They are usually dark brown in coloration with long hair. They occasionally have a hairy pendant of skin hanging below their throats. Moose have large ears and huge, pendulous muzzles. They have long legs and visible humps above the shoulders. The most striking feature of moose are the antlers (found only in the male moose.) Unlike reindeer antlers, the antlers of moose are very broad and flat. The largest recorded antler spread was over 6' wide.

I understand they are very good swimmers and can attain speeds up to six miles per hour. I do hope they will swim in the opposite direction from my little sailboat!

The scientific name of moose, *Alces alces*, can be thought of as an error because *Alces* is the Latin word for "elk," a common name for another class of deer, as far as North Americans are concerned. Europeans call moose "elk" and so bestowed them with the scientific name, *Alces* (the genus) *alces* (the

If there is one thing on this earth I despise, it is boat trailer tail lights. No matter what you do the damned things are unreliable. I am a careful and attentive driver with many miles of experience and some little pride. You won't catch me parking all cattywhompus with the lines at the parking lot, and you won't catch me making a turn or a lane change without signaling, and you won't see me stopping in the middle of the road and then signaling for the turn either. Except for Greyhound bus drivers, I think I am the only person in Georgia who gives a turn signal far enough ahead to do any good at all. I know I am the only person in Thomasville who can parallel park an automobile when there is only one parking place available, and you used to not be able to get a driver's license until you could demonstrate proficiency at that.

Anyway, I like my tail lights to work and always check them but the damned things are so cheaply made that even if you paint the guts with enough cosmoline (I have five gallons) to creep up and dim the bulb, they'll rust out in less than a year even if you don't back them under the water. Not only that, but there is something about the violent suspension of a boat trailer that defeats the connection between the cheap steel contacts or shakes the filaments out of the bulbs.

The Joys of Nature



By Ken Murphy

Moose, Moose



species). Many scientific names are double like that. I imagine it means there is only one species in the genus. And so goes the naming system which makes me think of the name,

LED Tail Lights

By Robb White

What happened to copper bulb contacts? I mean, to replace all that cheap plated steel with pure copper wouldn't take but about ten pennies to the side. Because of all that engineering economics, you don't ever know if the yahoo who has been following right on your tail for the last 15 miles will see your brake lights and turn signals when you have to do something or not. Back when I used to fix fiberglass boats for the insurance money, rear ended boats were my bread and butter. People run into the back of boats all the time. What I do is gradually slow down when I get to the last straight stretch before the turn to try to get him or her to finally break the mesmerizing connection with the transom of the boat and come on around.

You know some people used to say that you need to put the outboard in gear when trailering so the prop won't spin and wear out the seal. Hell man, that is a real seal like on an electric motor that will run at 3,600 rpm 24 hours a day for 15 years under load. It'll handle that little slow spin of the prop in the wind. The reason to put the engine in gear is

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Moose moose, not Latin, but a Native American word meaning "eater of twigs." Correct, and far more descriptive, wouldn't you say?

Actually, in my study of moose I did find one subspecies, *Alces alces gigas*, which is for the Alaskan moose that are far larger than those living farther south. An Alaskan male moose might weigh between 800 and 1600 pounds. *Gigas* is Latin for, yes, you guessed it, "a giant." Let me know if there are other subspecies.

Moose are prodigious eaters, averaging 45 pounds of wet forage a day, but this amount increases to near 60 pounds in the spring and a whopping 130 pounds daily in the autumn. They feast on plant growth in a lake or swamp. Moose love water lilies and will wade far out into a swampy pond to munch on them. So we're talking a daily intake of roughly 5-10% body weight, figuring a small female at 600 pounds or a large Great Lakes male at 1200 pounds.

Moose are found throughout northern North America and Eurasia. Their range coincides with that of circumpolar boreal forests. In North America they occur throughout Alaska, Canada, and the northeastern United States. They cannot stand hot weather and so stay in the high latitudes. Their large bodies, their inability to sweat, and the heat produced by fermentation in their gut, are the reasons. In summer you will see them under the shade of trees and cooling themselves in ponds and streams.

Since the weathermen here in Maryland have been using their favorite summertime expression, "hazy, hot and humid," for the last few weeks, Moosehead Lake, with daytime temperatures in the 70s, is definitely appealing to this sailor.

Contributions to this column should be emailed to Ken Murphy at kcmurphy@comcast.net.

to prevent propeller induced hypnosis. Sometimes I have to slow down to 15 mph before the light finally dawns on some fool. I imagine I can see a little light bulb come on above her head like in a comic strip when she realizes that the automatic transmission has shifted all the way down so far that the next gear is "Park."

While I am on light bulbs, why is it that you can't buy a tail light bulb as good as the one in any car when it was new? You know a new car will run for ten years on the original bulb and, when you finally have to replace it, you find that it has a shiny nickel plated base and looks like it is worth ten times the money as the replacement bulb. The only place I have found where you can get a bulb that good is where they sell genuine Mercedes Benz parts, and only a fool will put a Mercedes bulb in a boat trailer tail light.

So when I read (actually my son found out on the internet) that they had finally invented bulbless boat trailer tail lights, I determined to get me some. When I finally got around to it they were down to about \$40 at one of these discount auto parts places which have completely eliminated the old non-chain outfits around here. I put them on the trailer of the Rescue Minor and they are very bright and seem to be doing fine so far. I'll let you know in a year or two.

You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

Lois McClure Launch and Inaugural Lake Tour

After three years in the making, the 88' replica 1862 class canal schooner, *Lois McClure*, was launched on Saturday, July 3, on the Burlington, Vermont waterfront. After rigging and sea trials, the *Lois McClure* commenced an inaugural tour of Lake Champlain reconnecting communities around the Champlain Valley to the vibrant commercial era of the 19th century.

The captain and crew of *Lois McClure* are spending two months navigating the schooner around Lake Champlain, just as was done in the 1800s. School children and visitors alike will have the opportunity to learn what life was like aboard a canal boat, the specific cargoes that were transported, how the boat was constructed, as well as how a canal schooner was operated in 1862. In most locations *Lois McClure* will be open to the public on the weekends from 10am to 5pm and will operate school programs during the week.

The remaining schedule as of this issue (September 15) includes the following stops:

September 16-19: Town Pier, Essex, NY, school programs and public dockside tours.

September 22-23: Lock 12 Marina, Whitehall, NY, Whitehall Canal Conference and public dockside tours.

September 25-28: Town Pier, Port Henry, NY, school programs and public dockside tours.

September 30-October 3: Teachout's Wharf, Shoreham, VT, school programs and public dockside tours.

October 7-10: Westport Marina, Westport, NY, Foliage Festival and public dockside tours.

October 12-17: Lake Champlain Maritime Museum at Basin Harbor, VT, public dockside tours.

October 19-30: Perkins Pier, Burlington, VT, public dockside tours through end of season.

In the spring of 2005 *Lois McClure* will host schools from all over the region for an in-depth look at 19th century commerce, canal boat life, boat building, and sailing. Upon completion of the school year, *Lois McClure* will embark on her "Grand Journey," a voyage that will start on Lake Champlain and head down the Hudson River to South Street Seaport in New York City.

Information of Interest...

Cross Channel Amphibious Record Set

Richard Brandson, chairman of Virgin Airways and extreme sport junkie, broke a 40-year-old record for crossing the English Channel in an amphibious vehicle when he drove a Gibbs Aquada across the 22-mile wide Channel in an hour and 40 minutes. Great for Gibbs Technologies, orders for the \$115,000 amphibious sports car doubled since Brandson's feat. Brandson himself intends to

buy a fleet of the three seat Aquadas to ferry 1st Class passengers down the Thames from London to Heathrow Airport.

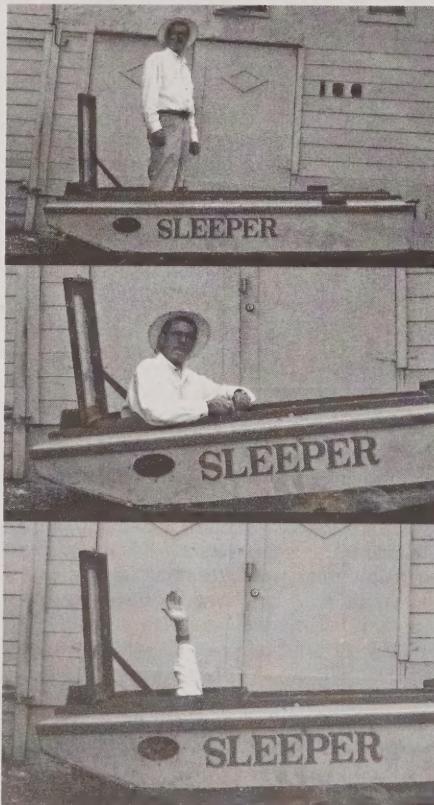
From *Business 2.0*, August 2004



Sliding into Sleeper

A reader of the recent series on building my Sleeper design ("The Swiss Army Knife of Boats Since 1988") asked how one must contort oneself in order to "go below." Here-with photos which illustrate the three-stage process.

Derek Van Loan, 186 Almonte Blvd., Mill Valley, CA 94941



Atlantic Challenge Launches New Website

Atlantic Challenge announces the launch of their new website, www.atlanticchallenge.com. The site is fresh, professional, and visually appealing while providing useful and informative content about our two core programs, The Apprenticeship and Community Sailing, as well as our other waterfront and maritime resource offerings. Visitors looking for information on The

Apprenticeshop programs will find a comprehensive history and photos and a detailed outline of The Apprenticeship program, including downloadable applications and forms and details on the current building projects.

Those interested in commissioning a new boat will find the latest boat catalogue as a downloadable file. Those who want more information about the Community Sailing Program will find sailing lesson schedules and applications, upcoming events, and photos of recent sailing sessions. The "How to Help" section outlines the different ways one can help support Atlantic Challenge's efforts through boat donations, gifts to the annual appeal, in-kind gifts, or through volunteering.

The "Who We Are" section explains the Atlantic Challenge community of staff, apprentices, alumni, Board of Trustees, donors, and volunteers. Throughout the site there are useful reminders of upcoming events, helpful for those wishing to learn about the abundant activities that take place throughout the year.

Atlantic Challenge is a nonprofit educational organization whose mission is to inspire personal growth through craftsmanship, community, and traditions of the sea. For further information call (207) 594-1800 or visit the new site at www.atlanticchallenge.com.

Information Wanted...

Sandbagger Drawing

Has anyone overall drawings, including sail rig, available for a sandbagger sailboat? I am not looking for construction details, only an overall view.

Wayne Cooper, 338 Fairway N., Tequesta, FL 33469-1915

Opinions...

Convinced

It was the story in *WoodenBoat* that finally convinced me. More precisely, I should say that it was the photo of the boat on its beam ends that did it! Reading a semi-fictional account in *Boats With An Open Mind* was just not the same as actually seeing that boat all laid over.

The other advantage of Birdwatcher is she overcomes our proclivity to reproduce, yet sail "safely" with the kids, whereas they could fall out of a SF Pelican they'd be hard pressed to fall out of Birdwatcher.

Robert Jacobs, Fresno, CA

More Comfortable With Mechanized Propulsion

I just finished reading Mark Fisher's "The Cruise From Hell" in the August 1 issue and recall that others have written of similar sailing laments of contrary winds, tides, currents, or luck. Many who love to sail seem to have no harmony with auxiliary propulsion, which often sits unused and unloved until needed and then fails to support its master.

I have sailed just enough to learn that I am more comfortable with mechanized propulsion. Steam, gas, diesel, or electric tickle my fancy while I find Dacron or cotton more suitable for clothing, duffle bags, or hankies. But I also have my misfortunes. As I write

this I am at anchor in the New London, Connecticut harbor, having planned to view the tall ships arrive tomorrow, only to learn I am one week too late. Nevertheless, I will view submarines, USCG vessels, tugs and barges, passenger ferries to Orient Point, Block Island, and Fishers Island, and the local lobstermen.

Life on the water is great no matter if one moves as planned or contrary wise.

Kent Lacey, Old Lyme, CT

Projects...

Foam Barge Update

I have reported on the foam barge project I started last year and I am still working out the bugs. I have not been able to get the boat to trim out to my satisfaction.

I remember an article written by Robb White in which he was bad mouthing these short dinghies. He gave several good reasons not to build a boat that size. I think he is right on several issues.

The seating layout that I described in an earlier issue worked but the boat was noticeably bow heavy when rowed solo. It did trim out with a heavy person in the center and a lighter one aft.

I added multiple skegs after the first launch, that helped but it still doesn't track very good.

I added an extension to the center seat making a T-shaped seat out of it. I then moved the oar lock sockets aft a little so the oars would always be in easy reach. This all helped but I find that I run out of leg room before the boat is trim.

I think that my problem is trying to do everything in an 8' boat. At 8' it doesn't tie down well on the top of my truck. The tie down lines want to slide over the ends of the boat. The boat is 4-1/2' wide so it doesn't fit in the back of my Ranger either. As a canoeist I find the idea of trailering a 40-lb. boat revolting.

I started this project to prove that I could build a boat out of lumber yard foam. I proved that I could do that. I may have saved some weight over a plywood boat of the same size but I didn't save any money. The foam was cheap but I used a lot of epoxy on this project and that drove up the cost.

All in all I am not very happy with the finished boat. This is a project that I had to try. I don't think that I will do it again.

Mississippi Bob Brown, Apple Valley, MN

This Magazine...

Likes the Bluejacket & Robb White

Messing About In Boats has many benefits, especially in my study of written English as taught by Mr. Robb White. Mr. White is a pleasure and treasure for this era as much as Mark Twain was in his time.

It is through MAIB that people like Mr. Robb White, Mr. Tom Lathrop, and Mr. Steve Tiebout with his Kayork Kayak, boat in a box design, find their best opportunity for expression to a sincerely interested audience.

I find the Bluejacket 24 to be the ideal cruising trailer boat. I think that anyone who has an interest in a classy but still economical, power cruiser should take a close look at

the Bluejacket 24. Mr. Lathrop's plan package is excellent and complete. He even includes wiring diagrams for the boat's electrical circuits.

Jack Hall, Arlington, TX

In Memoriam...

A Friend Has Crossed Over the Bar

My friend, Jim Palrang, age 76, died on July 11. He was born November 3, 1927 in Denver, Colorado. I was born on November 2, 1927 in Laverne, Oklahoma. Jim and I were both destined to fall in love with the lakes, rivers, and bays of the San Francisco and Sacramento deltas.

Jim was a fine, gentle man whose interests paralleled my own. In ways we were brothers. However, Jim was much taller than I at 6'5". I'm 5'11". His home was in San Mateo, California, quite near the San Francisco International Airport where he worked for United Airlines in their maintenance section.

Our paths nearly crossed at that time, his supervisor was Tom Faust, a close friend of mine as well as neighbor. Tom and I were in a small, two-place Luscombe light plane when we crashed in Shelter Cove, California in 1967 and Tom was killed. Jim remembered Tom very well.

I built a small 21' houseboat in 1996-97 with the able assistance of my brother-in-law, Lloyd Weaver. We had both migrated to Florence, Oregon, when we retired from our careers in the San Francisco Bay area.

Messing About in Boats magazine became the media in which to sell the houseboat when unfortunate financial losses forced me to do so. Jim Palrang and I were about to meet face to face. Jim drove to Florence from San Mateo to see firsthand the little boat that had caught his fancy in the MAIB ad.

I met him on the road to the little marina on Siltcoos Lake where the boat was moored. Jim opened the door of the compact sedan he had driven all night for 600 miles looking a bit haggard. He began to unwind himself from the car and in a moment I was face to face with one of the nicest guys I've ever known.

In another moment we stepped aboard my boat and I recognized the glint in his eyes that could only mean that he had made his decision to buy. I was happy. I had found the right buyer as well as a friend for the rest of his life.

After we talked a while and shook hands on the deal, Jim stuffed himself back into his compact sedan and left for San Mateo, 600 miles and 12 hours away. I later learned from him that he had been a long haul trucker and was used to long miles and short stops.

I had agreed to pull the little houseboat out of the water and find a driver with a big trailer to deliver it to the Burlingame Marina just a few miles north of San Francisco International Airport where Jim wanted it drydocked for a few days for bottom repainting before cruising it to Coyote Point Marina about a mile south of the southern end of the north-south runway at SFX. Jets pass over the Coyote Point Marina at about 500', but Jim said that after a couple of days spent there he no longer paid any attention to them.

The little houseboat became a retreat for Jim, a place where he went to write letters

and stories, and take naps and just listen to his thoughts. He would tell his wife, "I'm going down to the water," and she knew where he would be for the day. He also had a small sailboat and he made a study daily of what was going on with the Bay winds just in case he might go sailing if the notion struck him.

My one regret is that I never visited Jim at San Mateo to spend some time with him aboard his houseboat, camp cruising on lower San Francisco Bay. We were both photographers of birds and wildlife along the saltwater marshes, tying up or anchoring in the creeks and amongst the tule islands, listening to the wind rattling the tules and to the shore birds' cries, blackbirds claiming ownership along with the avocets, plovers, and yellowlegs. Seagulls are just renters.

These things I talked with Jim about doing but he would explain that he wasn't feeling well enough to try right then. Because he was never one to complain I never realized just how sick he was. Even when his doctor sent him home with orders to "rest" his letters to me continued, if only shorter, and less was said about plans to go sailing or to do some touch-up painting on the boat. He sounded like the same old Jim. I noted that he wrote more of his family or of coming doctor appointments. The truth of his condition did not change his attitude towards life.

I never expected the suddenness of the end, I never realized it was so close. I figured that I had time to get my ducks all in a row so I could still go down to visit with him, to see him and, yes, to pray with him. Sadly I was wrong.

Now that he is gone the memories stand out more vividly, especially that day we met for the first time at the marina here in Florence and that long frame unwound from that little car and he looked at me and we became friends. I was worried that the little houseboat might be bought by someone who wouldn't love it. But when Jim looked at my boat with that light in his eyes, he became my friend for life. I miss him.

Rags Ragsdale, Florence, OR

A Legend Has Passed On

The great man and legend of paddling had passed away. Verlen Kruger died in early August.

Hugh Horton, Mt. Clemens, MI



Forward facing rowing

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RI. Please visit our website:

www.frontrower.com

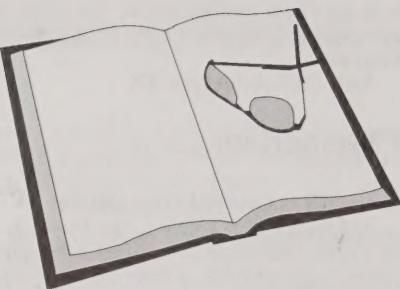
Handling Small Boats In Heavy Weather

By Frank Robb
Published 1965

Reviewed by Jeff Douthwaite

A refreshing, useful discussion of ways and means of coping with storms at sea, complete with many photos of huge picturesque breaking waves. The author, with a lifetime of commercial fishing, admits he doesn't know it all yet and asks for input from the reader; e.g., regarding what to do about rogue waves, which are the scariest of all it seems. (Other than prayer and life lines to the mast, who knows? But the good news is, most of us will never encounter one.) But as a skipper of a commercial fishing boat with years of rugged experience, mostly in the south Atlantic, there's precious little Robb doesn't know about his subject. And he salts his pages with lots of common sense which makes it more fun to read. He doesn't waste words, his book is only 129 pages.

Robb admits that managing a ship in a stormy sea is an art, not a science, and so opinions vary about the best ways to cope. In this regard, as many others have written, the coping strategy varies with the individual vessel and its idiosyncrasies, and the best advice is



Book Review

to thoroughly test one's vessel in big seas before the ultimate test arises. This, too, is not easy and Robb never says it is. In a traditional heavy, deep draft hull, heaving to or jogging slowly straight into the weather may be best. But in a lighter, shallow draft hull, it may be less uncomfortable to lie ahull and let her roll and sideslip.

John Voss, in his low slung, covered Indian canoe, *Tilicum*, found it best to use a sea anchor to ride out the gales and to cross the breaking bars. Main idea is to keep the vessel's forward speed down just enough for steering but not too much so that she may broach. Using the sea anchor seems to be a minority preference. Robb also finds it unlikely. But Voss used it repeatedly and successfully, as is well documented in his book, *Venturesome Voyages*, published in 1913. Robb concludes, "Never use a sea anchor except when it's urgent that you check your drift." Running with the seas, when you have room to do so, seems best to most. As Robb says, "You roll with the punches and with a small boat this robs the following seas of much of their sting."

On this Robb and Voss agree. I suspect the secret of successful sea anchoring is to find one which "fits" the vessel, not too large that it threatens to pull the bow or stern under and/or her cleats out, but just large enough to hold her speed down. A soft answer turneth away wrath.

Another significant factor, I suspect, is the shape of the vessel's stern. A double ender will cope with an overtaking breaking wave better than a flat transomed vessel which may get knocked farther off course by the impact. The obvious response, to run with the seas at full speed, is an error, says Robb dogmatically. "This is pure clap trap. In the first place a gale sea may be travelling at 30 knots so the ordinary power vessel can't outrun it. In the second place, if the skipper tries to outrun the seas at anything less than the speed of the seas themselves he is courting disaster. The only speed for running before is the slowest compatible with maintaining steerage way."

A surprising omission of this book is its complete silence on the role of stabilizers, either of the controlled vane type or the "flopper stopper" kind. I know the flopper stoppers are a wonderful boon when in a rolling sea and am still wondering about the limits, if any, of this mode of stabilizing in storms. This, too, I have found is a highly controversial topic. Some commercial fishermen tell me, "they're dangerous," others say "I leave 'em down all the time."

Robb talks occasionally of the utility of oil to calm the seas, especially in conjunction with sea anchors, and surprised me by not mentioning the question of legality of this. The book was published in 1965 in Britain which may explain it. I remember chatting with a fisherman in Santa Cruz, California, who said he used oil when in storms. When I asked, "Yes, but is it legal?" he replied, "If it saves your life, it is." He had me there.

I like Robb's praise for the traditional heavy round bottom craft, the hull's curvature fends off the impact of the waves like a boxer with shoulders rounded up, and with low slung cabins to reduce the impact, thus the damage, from boarding seas. And he even favors gaff rigged sails hanked on with hoops, which can be quickly doused, and reef point reefing as opposed to roller reefing. The former "fails safe" while the latter "fails dangerous" he writes trenchantly. His criticisms of the modern innovations ring true and are supported by the test of time. I admit to a bias here, being the owner of a heavy wooden, round bottomed ex-troller. I like its more graceful, less jerky ride, although I will admit she likes to roll more than the modern hard chined trawler yacht, but mine carries more ballast which means she will always right herself. Also, she carries flopper stoppers, of course.

Robb notes the advantage the commercial fishing vessel has over the sailboat, they have enough power to push straight into and through the storm if necessary, a gentle jibe at the typical modern sailboat with its cute little engine. He even says a gaff ketch rig is preferable to a sloop because the former has shorter masts which offer less windage drag in a windstorm. This, too, reveals a really traditional bias. But I remember when taking a trip on the Lady Washington, a square rigged Brigantine, going into the wind and looking at our miserable way, the helmsman said, "Pretty good speed, eh?"

"What? This? It looks like maybe two knots," I said.

"Yeah, but when we're running into a 20 knot wind we can't even move," he said. She was blasting along full bore on her 350hp diesel, but lots and lots of windage from all the masts, spars, shrouds, and rigging aloft kept her from moving. I was never so aware of what real windage can do.

Robb also discusses engine problems in rough waters, mainly those due to dirt in the fuel tanks which gets sloshed around mightily and fouls things up just when you really need the power. "Most owners appear to have a sublime faith in the ability of the fuel filters to cope with dirty fuel. This confidence is not shared by myself or, for that matter, by the people who make fuel filters, who will be the first to expatiate on the merits of keeping your tanks clean." The answer? Keep your tanks clean. He makes it sound easy. Alas, too often there's no easy way here short of ripping up the deck and fixing the tanks.

Other topics I wished he'd discussed, in conjunction with safety in storms, are ballast and how to tell when a vessel has enough. The modern trend seems to be to go light and fast, but I remember Beebe's comment in his fine book, *Voyaging Under Power*, "...but to me, whether a seagoing yacht carries some ballast or not, is what distinguishes the true seagoer from a vessel that is not really serious about it."

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It was a long winter by anyone's reckoning. As a sailor of a small craft, used to getting out in opportunistic pockets of unseasonably less than frigid weather, it was a very long winter. We seemed to not have those moments of memory, the surprise 58° day of full sun and gentle breeze that we took advantage of on our first season five years ago. Perhaps I was at the day job when they showed up. Whichever way I approach it, it was a long, long winter.

As the year before also unfolded from the grip of Father Frost into the lusty embrace of that floozy, Miz Summer, so did this season open with only a brief flirt with the temptress Spring. Maybe there's something about this global warming theory after all. Alaska is losing the glaciers, there has to be a balance in nature, so why not just relocate the frozen stuff a bit to the south, say Plum Island Sound?

Grumbling over odd weather patterns didn't stop us from putting keel to water on the weekend of the Summer Solstice. The weather was a bit soggy and we launched in an atmosphere closely resembling the inside of a damp wool sweater. Filaments of sodden air twined about our ankles and coiled coolly about throats, trailing chilly kisses along unprotected limbs. With a dozen other Melonseed owners, we embarked on the annual rendezvous for an undisclosed destination. Roger Crawford, the builder of the boat and the inventive trip planner, gave out directions to a safe harbor located on the upper Cape. The Captain and I set out as advance scouts while the rest of the convoy waited for a few late arrivals.

Sailing in foggy conditions is not high on most people's list of things to do. We have a different and much lower perspective on this activity. Fog lifts off the water as the day warms up. The surface of the water where we sit is often clear a full hour before the mid level areas around the decks of larger craft. Friday's conditions were more ephemeral than totally soaked in. We have, in the past, been able to sail carefully in the clearing 6'-8' high fog free cline that's kept the 30-footers on their hooks. One can't venture too far from a known shoreline or blithely cross the shipping channels, but you can have fun in your own secure patch of a quiet inlet, away from other traffic.

This adventure consisted of 14 sleek little boats, launched as the sun tried to burn off the vapors (with mixed results). We drifted out of a protected cove into a larger one and confounded the local residents, several types of ducks, songbirds drinking the coalesced dew from overhanging vegetation, and the owners of much larger boats shackled to their docks and moorings. As we made progress with a rising morning breeze, the mists rose and swirled up to about 100', lingering there as the forces of nature did their best to disperse them. We had full visibility across the larger harbor and could easily see the barrier beach that was our luncheon destination.

Gaining the mouth of the larger harbor, the flotilla splintered into smaller pods, sailing off to investigate the interesting architecture that rings this slumberous hurricane hole. *Marshmelon* tracked a fairly central course among an embarrassment of distractions. The Captain and crew chatted with other boats as they crossed our course, but chose to play with the wind rather than check out the de-



Window on the Water

By Chris Kaiser

Back(a)Float

mise of a small cottage which was being transformed into a palace like its neighbors.

Being out on the water for the first time in seven months was more than enough to be thankful for. The forgotten sound the boat makes as she rushes along with a freshening breeze, a throaty chuckle like a voluptuous woman's response to a slightly risqué comment. The steady thrum of the sail's edge as we come into the wind at a certain angle. There is a feeling of being "four dimensional" when I'm sitting on the floorboards, my seat bones absorbing the rush of water under the slightly flexible hull. There is a spatial awareness that comes from sitting 4" below the waterline, I am in intimate contact with the elements.

This first sail was almost an overload to my senses. The soft atmosphere that greeted us at the launch ramp was seductive and welcoming, the sweep of an osprey's wings and her successful plunge and snatch of a plump fish to feed her young was awe inspiring. The camaraderie of several like-minded individuals was heart warming, the sight of the Captain, back in his favorite milieu, was a joy. Coming into a new harbor was exciting and interesting, the quick trip down harbor to land on the narrow and fragile barrier beach was invigorating. Lunching on the damp sand, then shelling on the wild outer beach fed something deeper in me than food in the belly. As a first of the season, I'd say that this trip hit all the right notes and delivered all that could be expected of a symphony at sea.

Due to the iffy predictions for the next day, we headed home to the North Shore and passed up a sail in Hingham Harbor. By the time we arrived home mid morning the fog was gone and the sun lit the tops of wind driven waves like jewels. We rearranged our gear and launched on our homewater of Plum Island Sound. Sailing north up to the point of no return on a changing tide in the marshes of Newbury, we turned back for the barn and idled our way home with a series of side trips. Sailing up the little creek behind Potato Island we had lost enough water under the keel to stop the search of a route through to the Rogers River. Applying a strong arm to the canoe paddle kept for this purpose, I was able to maneuver us back into more open and

wind-driven water. Still reluctant to call it a day, we puddled about in the back reaches of Eagle Creek, alarming the egrets fishing the shallows. Finally the clouds returned and added a chill to the tired bodies. Even slightly chilled, we regretted the turn for the ramp.

Sitting on the porch at the club we toasted the sunset and spoke of the days ahead and new destinations to explore. It was a long time arriving, but summer IS here and we are back on the water. Ratty had it right, there's simply nothing like Messing About in Boats.

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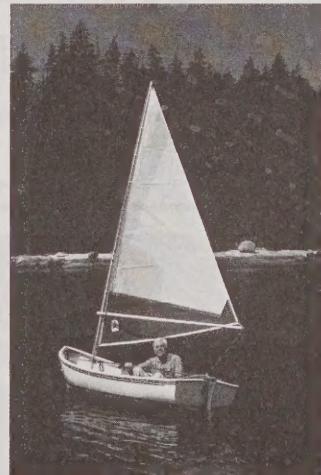
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Blackburn 2004

By Bob Hicks

Blackburn Class Winners (In Order of Finishing Times)

Outrigger Multi Canoes (10)

Manuiwa OCC: Blake Conant, Bob Silvernail, Marc Gillespie, John Mathew, Paul Dyka, Peter Heed	2:29:29
Sliding Seat Racing Single – Men (14)	
Dan Gorriaran	Peinert Dolphin 2:32:01
Sliding Seat Racing Double (3)	
Patrice Rioux & Sara Hall	Maas 2:34:08
Racing Single Kayaks - Men (15)	
Brian Heath	Thunderbolt 2:45:15
Open Class (3)	
Ken Parker, Shelagh Donahue, Bill Wolbach	Sliding Seat Triple 2:46:54
Surf Skis – Men (7)	
Mike Tracy	Surf Ski 2:50:45
Touring Double Kayaks – Mixed (4)	
Sara Evertson & Thomas Mailhot	Guillemot Double 2:58:03
Sliding Seat Racing Single – Women (1)	
Kinley Gregg	Maas 24 3:04:02
Touring Single Kayaks – Men (56)	
Mark Jacobson	Epic 18 3:10:57
Touring Double Kayaks – Men (5)	
Tony Taddeo & John Nocera	Necky Nootka 3:12:09
Fixed Seat Double (3)	
Donald & Dustin Carter	Piscataqua Wherry 3:16:07
Sliding Seat Touring Single – Men (5)	
John Sanger	Alden 3:21:21
Outrigger Single Canoes (3)	
Bill Kuklinski	Current Designs 3:25:55
Racing Single Kayaks – Women (3)	
Pam Browning	Surge 3:30:28
Fixed Seat Single (13)	
Paul Neil	Adirondack Guideboat 3:31:39
Touring Single Kayaks – Women (7)	
Alexandra Landrum	Necky Looksha III 3:43:32
Sliding Seat Touring Double (1)	
Marshal & Fred Dodge	Alden 3:44:38
Multi With Cox (1)	
Gloucester Rowing, Peter Brau, Beverly Hudson, Nancy, Carolyn McCarthy, Nancy Dudley, Bill Hellmoth, Beckey Bernie, Barbara Jansson	Pilot Gig 3:46:57
Touring Double Kayaks – Women (2)	
Elina Bergen & Suzanne Sweeney	Wilderness Echo 4:07:33
Banks Dory Double (6)	
Bill Crosby & Marc Devoe	4:21:55
Banks Dory Single (2)	
Glenn Harrington	4:40:51



Overall winner and outrigger canoe class winner, the Manuiwa OCC crew of Blake Conant, Bob Silvernail, Marc Gillespie, John Mathew, Paul Dyka, Peter Heed.

Dan Gorriaran in his Peinert Dolphin racing sliding seat single, class winner and 3rd overall.



Patrice Rioux and Sara Hall, sliding seat racing double class winners and 5th overall in a Maas double racing shell.

Ken Parker, Sheilah Donaghue and Bill Wolbach, Open Class winners and 8th overall in the sliding seat triple Banana Boat.



By Bob Hicks

The record turnout for the 2004 Blackburn Challenge seems to indicate that interest and enthusiasm for this event has yet to peak. There's something about a 20-mile open ocean race around a prominent Massachusetts North Shore peninsula on which is located the historic fishing city of Gloucester that exerts an irresistible appeal to those wishing to pit their rowing or paddling skills against the demands of the 20-mile course with all its vagaries of wind and wave and weather from year to year. This year 161 hopefuls turned out, the single largest contingent being 56 men's touring kayaks. Of particular interest was the Banks dory turnout up to eight, the one class of boat true to the Gloucester fishing heritage.

While women are far outnumbered by men in this event, it was notable that the third overall finisher, a two-person racing sliding seat shell, had a woman as half its crew, Sara Hall. The winning touring double kayak, in a time just under 3:00 (good for 20th overall) also had a woman as half its crew, Sara Evertson. The sixth place outrigger and ninth overall finisher was entirely crewed by women, Kristina Burns, Lisa Harrity, Tara Auch, Nancy Kaplan, Kat Gandy, and Janka Flaska. The top placing woman soloist was Kinley Gregg in her Maas 24 racing sliding seat single in 3:04, right up there with the high placers overall.

The men's kayak racing single class was dominated by Doug Bushnell's West Side Boatshop Thunderbolts. Winner Brian Heath, overall seventh place finisher, led a sweep of eight of the top nine finishers, only Mike McNulty's Necky Phantom in second breaking up the parade of military looking Thunderbolts. And designer/builder Bushnell was still out there in the game in which he once was a serious contender, placing 15th.

Not quite so total was the dominance of Epic 18s displayed amongst the 56 entrants in the men's kayak touring single class. Winner Mark Jacobson did lead a sweep of four of the top ten spots for Epic, with a total of six entered topping the brand entries, followed by five Necky Looksha IVs and three

each Guillemot RBAs, NDK Greenlanders, QCC 700s, and Seda Gliders. A total of 32 different makes/models took part, obviously touring single kayaks have a flourishing array of manufacturers serving this market.

While not so overwhelmingly dominant as the Thunderbolt racing kayaks were, Peinert Dolphins did dominate the sliding seat racing single class, winner Dan Gorriaran was third overall, leading a sweep of the top four placings, with three more backing these up for a total of seven-out of 14 entrants. Unique in this high performance class was Gary Piantedosi rowing a 24' Sawyer racing canoe fitted out with one of his Piantedosi Row-Wing drop in sliding seat rigs. Gary found the boat, a last-minute acquisition of considerable age, found behind a Vermont barn, was so unstable with the Row Wing rig 8" above the bottom that he spent too much time just staying upright. Gary was not pleased.

Two boats that do well year after year in their classes are the creations of Cape Cod rower John Aborn. Rowing his Monument River wherry, which is a plywood modification of a traditional Piscataqua River wherry, he was bested once again in the fixed seat single class of 13 only by athlete and racer Paul Neil in one of Steve Kaulback's Adirondack guideboats. And John's stretched version of his boat for two rowers again won the fixed seat double class over just two other contenders, but in a time that placed them first over all other fixed seat boats and third amongst the sliding seat racing doubles. The Carter brothers, Donald and Dustin, do this every year.

Another unlikely performer is the triple sliding seat rig that Ken Parker and friends enter every year. The bright yellow plywood craft, built a number of years ago at the now defunct Artisans School in Rockport, Maine, finished an incredible eighth overall ahead of many, many more exotic and professionally designed and built craft, just 17:21 behind the race winning six-man outrigger canoe.

The only six-oared gig to enter this year was Gloucester's own Scilly Isles gig *Siren Song* with a mixed crew. The large gig turnout each March at Hull's Snow Row melts away come summer to almost nothing at this most prestigious of rowing events for such craft. We are told that many are school crews away on summer holidays and others simply cannot transport their big boats to the race or afford the steep entry fee for a multi-crewed boat. The outrigger clubs do not appear to have this problem judging from the entry of ten this year, some from far down the Atlantic coast.

A first spotted this year was an Alden shell fitted with one of Ron Rantilla's FrontRower forward facing rigs. Arthur Kuckles was right there at the start line eager to have a go and did the course in the Open Class in 3:55:17.

Last man home was John Giulietti in his Swampscott dory in 7:41:30, a tribute to tenacity of purpose all alone way back there.

Finishers in Under Three Hours

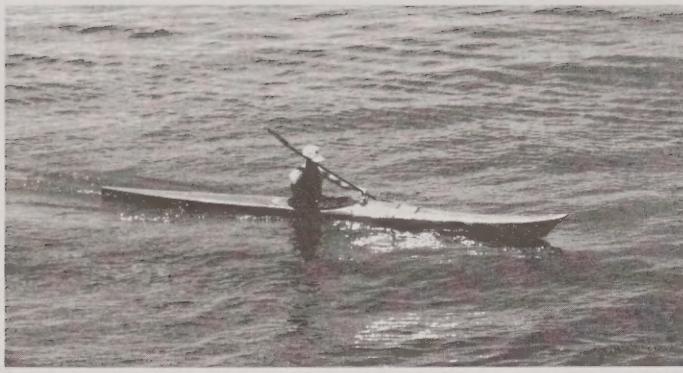
Twenty boats finished in under three hours this year. The six-person outrigger canoes and the racing single kayaks totally dominated the race with six each of the under three-hour finishers, with the outriggers concentrated in the leading ten. Despite the placid sea and wind conditions, the record set in 2001 at 2:21:45 by the two-man sliding seat shell of Joe Holland and Dana Gaines was not beaten. Neither of the latter were entered this year.

Two each sliding seat racing singles, sliding seat racing doubles, and surf skis, and one each sliding seat triple and touring double kayak completed the count.

1. Outrigger Canoe 2:29:29
Manuiwa OCC: Blake Conant, Bob Silvernail, Marc Gillespie, John Mathew, Paul Dyka, Peter Heed.
2. Outrigger Canoe 2:31:09
OCC Northeast: Dick Ulbrich, Brent Lysiek, Gary Aprea, Sean Jennings, Nick Lysiek, Roger Henry.
3. Sliding Seat Racing Single 2:32:0
Dan Gorriaran, Peinert Dolphin
4. Outrigger Canoe 2:33:52
NEOCC Nani Eklena: Mike Handa, no further crew listing
5. Sliding Seat Double 2:34:08
Patrice Rioux, Sara Hall, Maas
6. Outrigger Canoe 2:40:51
Manuiwa OCC: John Zeigler, Del Cummings, Marc Lessard, Cole Lee, Teryl Chapel
7. Racing Kayak Single 2:45:15
Brian Heath, West Side Thunderbolt
8. Sliding Seat Triple 2:46:54
Ken Parker, Shelagh Donahue, Bill Wolbach, Banana Boat
9. Outrigger Canoe 2:49:03
Kent Island OCC: Nancy Wallace, Christine Rozycki, Susan Maher, Liz Fischer, Kirsten, Debbie Hall
10. Racing Kayak Single 2:49:40
Mike McNulty, Necky Phantom
11. Racing Kayak Single 2:50:32
Timothy Dwyer, Thunderbolt
12. Surf Ski 2:50:45
Mike Tracey, Surf Ski
13. Racing Kayak Single 2:51:38
Ken Cooper, Thunderbolt
14. Sliding Seat Racing Double 2:53:33
Jeb Besser & Chris Ward, Maas double
15. Sliding Seat Racing Single 2:56:00
John Hughes, Peinert Dolphin
16. Racing Kayak Single 2:56:11
Bill Baker, Thunderbolt
17. Racing Kayak Single 2:56:15
Charles Crowley, Thunderbolt
18. Outrigger Canoe 2:56:46
Kent Island OCC, Melissa Stewart, Pat Leonhardt, Rick Swan, Jim Hall, Tristan Stewart, Jack Brosius
19. Double Kayak Mixed 2:58:03
Sara Evertson & Thomas Mailhot, Guillemot
20. SurfSki 2:59:42
Mark Weber, Mako Millenium Surf Ski

Big turnout of Banks dories, 8 ain all.





Brian Heath, 7th overall, led a near sweep of the racing kayak singles for Doug Bushnell's West Side Boat Shop Thunderbolts.



John Aborn strove mightily in his own designed and built Monument River wherry but could not stay with Paul Neil in the Kaulback Adirondack guideboat for the overall fixed seat single win.



Paul Neil won his 8th straight fixed seat singles class event in the Kaulback Adirondack guideboat, making him the winningest Blackburn competitor over the years regardless of boat type.

MAIB chronicler of long distance paddling adventures, Reinhard Zollitsch, paddled one of three single outrigger canoes taking part.



Sara Evertson and Thomas Mailhot in their 24' Guillemot double touring kayak, undertook a series of "power 20s" as they closed on the finish and realized they could not only win the mixed touring double class but also finish in under 3 hours. Their 2:58:02 was good for 19th overall.



Donald and Dustin Carter, fastest of the fixed seat boats in a stretched version of the John Aborn designed Monument River wherry.



The lone big multi-oared gig, *Siren Song*, crewed by a mixed crew of local Gloucester Rowers, Peter Brau, Beverly Hudson, Nancy, Carolyn McCarthy, Nancy Dudley, Bill Hellmoth, Beckey Bernie, Barbara Jansson

Arthur Kuckles' Alden, fitted out with one of Ron Rantilla's Front Rower forward facing rigs, was entered in the Open Class, catchall for all boats that did not clearly fit into the other classes.



The Mug Race

By Bob Halsey

This my report of our efforts in the 2004 Mug Race, the 51st annual 40-mile sailing race from Palatka, Florida, to Jacksonville Florida, on the St. John's River, that I have been competing now for about nine years. It is the first Saturday of May and usually fits into our trip north from Naples, Florida, to Willoughby, Ohio.

This year I got Noble Enge to do it again in his sailing canoe, a Clearwater model, and I had my old cedar strip canoe, *Sugar*. Noble was sailing with his 55sf sail by Bremen. I was sailing with my combination ACA sail rigged with the gaff tight to the mast, 44sf and a jib of 11sf by Doyle Sailmakers. We shuttled our canoes and cars on Friday as we had to start at 7:30am Saturday. We stayed in the Holiday Inn Palatka and launched from their frontage on the river.

The start is off the hotel about a mile out in the river. It was low tide and light SSE wind so we had little trouble getting off the beach. When I first got there Thursday, a strong wind and sea from the east would have made it very difficult. At the start Noble got a better start and stayed ahead. My smaller main sail and the difficulty getting the jib to fill and pull steadily when sailing downwind detracted from my speed. But by the time we got to the power line crossing, about a mile, I could tell that we had a good chance to finish the race before the cut off time of 8:15pm.

As we headed up the next leg on a starboard tack it seemed strange. We were alone in the lead, usually by this time the bigger boats would be all around causing wind shadows, etc. The next leg is about 14 miles generally north in direction. The wind gradually built a sea and my work was cut out to balance the canoe and try to keep the jib filled. I had a jib boom and outhaul lines but the wind was variable in strength and direction. So I had my hands full trying keep the jib pulling.

As the seas increased from the stern, the canoe swallowed around a lot. I got so exhausted at one point I had to pull into the lee of a point into some bullrushes and rest 15 minutes, eat a granola bar, and drink some water. The fleet caught up to me at this time. Recovering, I took off again. I made pretty good time, considering, and passed through the bridge at Green Cove Springs, a little over halfway. I was off Noble's house about 3:30pm with about 10 miles to go. I figured I had it made. Noble was far ahead out of sight since my rest stop.

The weather changed. I could see black clouds and lightning to the north and east. That was not too bad as I was heading NNW towards the turn buoy off the west end of the I-295 bridge. But, as I was off Julington Creek Bay, the wind shifted to NNE. Now I had a head wind and a storm was closing in.

Noble, meanwhile, had been surprised that he was still all alone in the lead, but as the wind shifted he was concentrating on sailing and got turned around, he was sailing the wrong way. As he sensed something was amiss, he dug out his compass and, sure enough, he was going south rather than north. He corrected that but several boats had passed

him by then. Despite the storm he did manage to finish the course.

Meanwhile, I made a couple tacks upwind and was crossing tacks with other racers off Mandarin Point. I was on port tack as the storm got worse, heavy wind, seas, and very heavy rain, thunder, and lightning, very poor visibility. I was tired and getting exhausted again. I decided to tack to starboard so I wouldn't be crossing boats that I had seen coming up. In the maneuver with the canoe wallowing around, I lost it and fell into the water on the windward side. The canoe was filling with water, I hung onto the rail, the sail still dragging me along. I was unable to get back in even though the sail was holding the boat from rolling to windward. I didn't have enough strength to get over the rail.

Then a big sailboat with man and wife, Hutch and Meg, hove to and asked if I was all right. I hollered, "No!" He jumped in the water and tied a line to my bow and then helped me over the rail into my boat, now full of water. We lowered my sails. Meg controlled their boat and made radio calls for help. They got bumpers out and got my canoe alongside and dragged me over the rail into their boat.

Then a big Searay came along and took me off the sailboat, they were anxious to get on with the race. Pete and Phil in the Searay were very solicitous. I had a wetsuit on so I wasn't too cold, but a jacket to cut off the wind was good. They were part of a Searay group doing rescue work. Their radio was full of rescue talk and in contact with the Rudder Club.

They decided to take me in to the club and another rescue boat would drag my canoe into the Rudder Club. It was still storming, even with the windshield wipers full on it was hard to see a few hundred feet. When they got in they tied up next to another boat and put me in it. They were helpful with hot drink and blankets. They were more worried than I was about my health. I finally was helped up the dock to the Rudder Club of-

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessings of the Lord" (Deut 16:16)

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fice. A police officer standing by in the office called for the paramedics who checked me over and decided I was okay for 87 years (blood pressure, 100 over 60).

On the way in I had seen another motor boat pulling in Noble's canoe, so I was worried about him as I didn't think he had a wetsuit. It seems after he passed the finish line and was going under the I-295 bridge a gust of wind turned him over and this motor boat, not an official rescue boat, offered him help. Meanwhile the other rescue boat pulled my boat in and both mine and Noble's canoe were on land.

In the end Noble got sixth place in the race. They had 199 boats of all types and sizes in the race. I think I am getting a little old for this.



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Anniversary Celebration

By Jim Lacey



A pretty Blue Jay in front of the welcome tent.



A kayaker tours the boats on display.

Bow on view of *Bolero*.



The 75th anniversary of the Sparkman & Stephens firm was held at Mystic Seaport Museum on July 9-11 with Olin Stephens, the dean of American yacht designers, on hand for the occasion. Some 70 Sparkman & Stephens vessels made their way to Mystic Seaport for the occasion and a few more were on display from the Seaport's collection.

Though *Bolero*, the 73' custom yawl, appeared to be the main attraction, I enjoyed seeing a bright finished little Blue Jay and the functional 17' fiberglass daysailer Designers Choice among such august company. Alas, the 19' Lightning class, Olin Stephens' classic racing sloop that does double duty as a comfortable daysailer, was not represented. The event was designed to celebrate elegant and lavish yachts, some of which, to the delight of photographers, can spread about an acre of sail. There were, of course, more modest boats, including the latest S&S launch and the spanking new and pretty Morris 36 daysailer. But perhaps "modest" is not the first adjective most messing abouters would come up with to describe a 36' daysailer.

In addition to the S&S designed boats on display, there were presentations at the Seamen's Inn, or Inne as they spell it to suggest olde timey charm, including slide lectures, films, and videos. I sat in on the conclusion of Robbie Doyle's discussion of the technical problems involved in the increased mast height and sail area required to drive very large sailboats and on all of R.C. Keefe's slide show of 45 S&S yachts that live on the West Coast, mainly in San Francisco or San Diego. When one yachtsman named his boat *Narraganset*, to the mystification of his club members, he explained that he had bought the beer company and the yacht came with it, the sort of wit perhaps more typical of Down East than out west.

There were parties, an awards dinner, and an S&S daysail on Fishers Island Sound, together with an IYRS classic yacht rendezvous scheduled for Sunday. Though they're in a different league, my impression is that sailors of ocean crossing racing yachts have the same enthusiasm and camaraderie as those of us who mess about in boats that would fit in their lazarettes. When I, with pride and a touch of irony, showed R.C. Keefe a picture of my 13'8" Crawford Melonseed skiff, he said, "What a pretty boat!"



Bob Keefe relaxes after his presentation.



Olin Stephens with your reporter. Olin is the good looking guy.



Kids at anchor.

Designers Choice, a functional glass daysailer.



Party aboard *Bolero*.



A jumble of masts and flags.

Contrasting S&S designs: a racing sloop and an amphibious truck.



Our history here in Minnesota is very short compared to the Eastern Seaboard. Yes, we did have some early explorers. They were mostly fur traders and priests. The first U.S. presence in Minnesota didn't happen until 1804 when Zebulon Pike first came to explore the northern part of the Louisiana Purchase.

Fifteen more years went by before the army was sent to secure the land for the U.S. At that time Colonel Snelling decided to build a military fort at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. A state park there still bears his name. Before that year was over, the town of Mendota started up to supply booze to the soldiers. Minnesota was on its way to becoming an entertainment center.

Between 1820 and 1850, Minnesota was growing. Some folks drifted in from the Great Lakes and some came up the Mississippi River. In 1854 the railroad reached the Mississippi River at Rock Island, Illinois. At this time some promoters got their heads together and decided to hold the Grand Excursion. They assembled all of the steam boats available that were above Rock Island. With a little promotion they managed to assemble enough paying passengers to fill these boats. This was to become a great grandstand event. All the politicians of the day had to be present.

The boats traveled together as much as possible up to St. Paul, another new town originally called Pigs Eye. Upon arrival, much speech making was to happen before the partying began. Some of the boats were able to make it up to the Falls of St. Anthony and more speeches and partying happened. This was the beginning of what was to become the Grand Excursion. Tourists from back east began to flock to Minnesota. The jet setters of the 1850s put Excelsior on their agendas.

Excelsior was a small town west of the present city of Minneapolis. This is a lake front town and it had some four star hotels. This was the destination of the Grand Tour. St. Paul was not a dependable port. You could not depend on getting there, especially during the low water in mid summer when the folks wanted to come.

The port of Nininger became the turnaround point for the boats. Nininger became the place where the tourists would transfer from boat to stage coach for a ride through the prairie, past Indian villages and buffalo herds to get to the four star hotels at Excelsior. Nininger became so well known back east that building lots were being sold at the New York Stock Market.

The Civil War ended the Grand Excursion. The same folks who did the tour would now take the train and carriages out to watch the Civil War battles happening.

Today Nininger is mostly farm land located just upstream from Lock #2 at the town of Hastings, Minnesota. On the right bank there are a small cluster of homes and a very plain landing. Nothing there tells of its great days of fame.

The Grand Excursion

By Mississippi Bob

Excelsior is still an entertainment spot. Until my teen years they had a fair sized amusement park there. The hotels are gone, as are the amusement parks. Today there are yacht clubs and malls. It is a place where the ladies can go shopping and dining.

Let's get back to the Grand Excursion which originally happened in 1854. In 2004 some new promoters decided to have a 150th anniversary event just like the original. They mustered many of the steam boats and paddlewheelers from the waterway and ran the same trip to St. Paul. The river has changed, it is now all locks and dams creating a long chain of lakes. The event did not change much, it still was a great political grandstand.

I first heard about this event last winter at Lock #2's Christmas party, the lockmaster told me about it then. He invited me down to watch the boats passing through at that time. I put his invite on the back burner for a few months until the news came out that it was indeed going to happen. The Minneapolis paper began building the event up and published an agenda.

I decided to run downriver and catch the boats coming upriver. I looked at the agenda that I had saved from the paper and it seemed real obvious that if I went to Lake Pepin on Friday I would catch many of the boats on the lake. My son offered the use of his motor boat and a small group of us drove to Lake City and launched his boat.

There was no action at Lake City so I thought maybe the boats were still downriver. We ran down to the lower end of the lake and pulled in at the town of Pepin, Wisconsin. I met a friend there on the beach who told me that the boats had all passed through early that morning and I could probably catch them at the town of Red Wing, Minnesota.

We pulled our boat out of the lake and backtracked up the highway to Red Wing and launched there. We ran up the river toward downtown Red Wing and began to see much activity. We had found the fleet. The *Delta Queen* was tied up at the city's waterfront and several smaller boats were up into some of the side bays loading passengers. They were selling rides up and down the harbor, letting a lot of folks feel that they were part of the event.

My kids and their friends were taken with all this activity. Besides the paddlewheelers that had gathered there were hundreds of pleasure boats of all sizes and shapes. We were among them. I was there for photos and got a few.

Besides the boats there was a steam powered train pulling a dozen or more passenger cars. I had forgotten how dirty they are. The train pulled out of the station while we watched and disappeared in a cloud of its own smoke.

When we arrived back at the launch ramp I noticed a group of tents that had a military look about them. I next noticed a Confederate flag flying amongst them. As we landed our boat the cannons began going off. The Union Army had to be close by. We were busy loading our boat so I didn't get to see

the great battle, but judging from the rapidity of the firing they had to have had quite a few cannons.

As I was leaving the park I noticed a voyageur campground and Indian village. The Civil War battle and the voyageur camp may have been from a different era but such inconsistencies got a lot of people involved in making the event happen.

On Saturday, July 3, I went back to my old lock with my bride to watch the boats pass through. Lock #2 is the last lock on the way to St. Paul and the boats bunched up there so they could make a grand entrance into St. Paul. The lockmaster had an area set up where we could watch from close up as each boat passed through. We had a bit of company, other Corps of Engineers employees and retirees like myself.

I had seen enough steam boats by that time but my bride was having a grand time, really getting into the mood of the event. The first thing I wanted to know was whether each boat was really a paddlewheeler or did it have screw propellers underneath. The next thing was to determine whether or not each boat was actually steam powered.

The *Mississippi* and the *Delta Queen* were both steam boats, however, both had diesel thrusters they use for landings. The *Celebration Belle* out of Moline was next largest, it had a rather phony looking paddlewheel. Among the smaller boats the *Julia Belle Swain* from LaCross, Wisconsin, was a real steamboat driven by a paddlewheel. The *Spirit of Peoria* was a very nice looking paddlewheeler with the lines that one might expect on a Mississippi River boat. She had two full decks all enclosed and a Texas cabin on top and a big glass wheelhouse. She had a metal cover over the chain drive and was definitely not a steamer.

The *Lilly Belle*, a small boat from the Dubuque River Museum, had an interesting split paddlewheel that was driven by hydraulic motors. The split wheel set-up allowed either half to run in either direction independently, allowing the boat to be controlled like a twin screw motorboat.

A person is not supposed to notice things like the paddlewheel not touching the water, but I do. I kept my mouth shut so as to not spoil the day for my bride.

This event thrilled a lot of folks all the way up the river. When the boats all bunched up to make their grand entrance into St. Paul there were an estimated 150,000 folks standing in the rain to see their grand entrance.

The next day was the 4th of July and the Grand Excursion was now the furthest thing from my mind. I went out in one of my smaller canoes and put in upstream from downtown St. Paul. My plan was to enjoy some surfing on the wakes of the large cruisers and houseboats that play in that area. As I approached the landing at Ft. Snelling State Park I was surprised to find the *Lilly Belle* tied up at the landing. I was invited aboard and found that this boat, part of a fleet tied up together, served several environmental groups.

I chatted briefly with a lady from the State Park, then with some of the folks promoting clean water. I am always glad that there are new young people ready to fight for that cause. I found that this boat served a very different and much more important purpose than did the Queens.

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The *Spirit of Peoria* at the Red Wing waterfront.



The *Delta Queen* pushing out of the lock.



The *Julia Belle Swain* taking on passengers.

The *Julia Belle Swain* and *Spirit of Peoria* in the lock together.



The *Celebration Belle* at the lock.

The *Lilly Belle* hiding in a slip at Red Wing.



Celebrating 400 Years of Acadian Presence in North America

On May 14, 1804, Lewis and Clark led the intrepid Corps of Discovery from the confluence of the Missouri River with the Mississippi to find a waterway to the Pacific. They were to report back to President Jefferson about the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase and beyond, and they did, with comprehensive trip reports, drawings of scenery, animals, plants, and people, as well as extensive charts. That was 200 years ago and without a doubt the beginning of a new era. (See my "L&C + 200" article in *MAIB*, October 1/15, 2003.)

We have to go back another 200 years, exactly, to witness a similar feat with the same importance for what is now known as the U.S. and Canada, the first permanent settlement of North Europeans on the eastern shores of the Atlantic (north of Florida). Four hundred years ago, on June 26, 1604, to be exact, Pierre Dugua led 79 French settlers and traders to a small island in the St. Croix River along the present-day CAN/AM border (between Maine and New Brunswick) to establish a permanent trading post in the New World. In return, the King of France, Henry of Navarre, gave Dugua a trading monopoly in the lucrative fur trade and the title "Lieutenant General of Acadie" on top of already being a noble with the title of "Sieur de Mons."

With that act, French Acadia was born which, together with the founding of the city of Quebec by Samuel de Champlain four years later, is the cradle of today's 18 million North American people, of French descent.

The Vikings Were Different

It is of interest to note that the landing on St. Croix Island predates the first British settlements of 1607 in Jamestown, Virginia, as well as the Pilgrims' leap off their *Mayflower* onto Plymouth Rock in 1620. Sure, everybody knows that "in fourteen hundred ninety two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue," an event with monumental consequences, but he did not stay. He came, he saw, and left again, like so many other early Spanish and Portuguese explorers.

And so did the Vikings, by the way, around 1000, touching on "Markland" (Labrador) and "Vinland" (Newfoundland) following the receding walrus herds and looking for adventure. They had no intentions of settling on these shores, but rather establishing seasonal hunting and fishing stations like the Basques and Portuguese had done before them, maybe even before Columbus, but certainly before our Pilgrim Fathers.

The Vikings, according to Farley Mowat's *Westviking*, were also strangely afraid of the native Beothuk people and were very reluctant to settle on their turf. The Viking camp at L'Anse au Meadows at the Straits of Belle Isle (between Labrador and Newfoundland), so he thinks, was only a temporary camp, home base for a group of "slater Vikings" looking for Leif Eriksson's fabled "Vinland," the land of wine and roses. Leif never told anybody where it was exactly, not even his own sons. (He may have had a very good reason for it, he may have made up the embellishments in true Viking fashion!) But the Vikings, according to Mowat, decided to look for it anyway and established a search camp at L'Anse au Meadows, from where

The Acadians Have Landed

By Reinhard Zollitsch



they fanned out to check both the eastern and western shores of Newfoundland as well as the southern shore of Labrador. But when they did not find the "promised land," they broke camp and returned to Greenland, which likewise was everything but green, another euphemistic misnomer.

The First French Acadian Settlement

Unlike the Vikings, the French 1604 expedition came over from today's LeHavre in five big, sturdy, seagoing ships full of building supplies, provisions, trading goods, tools, arms, even guns. They meant business, they came with a purpose. This was no raiding party, they weren't buccaneers or pirates, but peaceful settlers and adventurous traders, but they were willing to protect their turf against other raiders and the native popula-



tion if necessary. No, they did not ask permission from the Passamaquoddy, the Malaseet, or Micmacs to land on this modest little island, but they also did not drive anybody away.

They tried to establish a good rapport with the local tribes, as the French have always done, especially in Voyageur country, because they needed them as guides and trading partners. The French group of 79 was totally convinced they were bringing the "locals" a better life with the spoils of European culture, as well as saving their souls with Christianity, Catholicism, that is. As they saw it, it was a win-win situation, but just in case, they brought some guns to protect their turf, mostly against other European raiders like the British, the Spaniards, and the Portuguese.

The St. Croix group, I read, was part of a larger French project of five ships and 120 men, all making a first landing on Sable Island off Nova Scotia, what a feat in itself! From there, two ships with 41 men aboard went towards the St. Lawrence to trade, one ship went to Canso, Nova Scotia, and the remaining two ships and 79 men, led by Dugua and Champlain, explored the south coast of Nova Scotia and the Bay of Fundy. They all liked the Annapolis Basin area but decided instead to try their luck on the other side of the tide-ripped Fundy Bay, on a small island in the tidal part of the St. Croix River where it empties into Passamaquoddy Bay.

A Great Choice for a Settlement, but...

What a decision, facing a new venture in the New World, with new people, in an area often shrouded in fog and surrounded by extreme tides. Why would anybody choose a place like that? I felt I had to revisit Passamaquoddy Bay in my trusty canoe to check things out and reread Champlain's trip reports and other pertinent literature to inform myself. So I spent June 10-13, 2004, on and around this little island at the mouth of the St. Croix River and the greater Passamaquoddy Bay area to get reacquainted with the lay of the land of one of my favorite haunts.

I was impressed right from the beginning that the ships made it across the North Atlantic to Sable Island so early in the season and found their way into Passamaquoddy Bay. Verrazano, as well as Jacques Cartier, must have sailed by here on their 1524/1534 trips. Even if our intrepid group of French traders and settlers had heard about this huge tidal bay, it is still difficult to find and even harder to get into. There are only three very small, rock-studded openings into the bay through which the 19' tide gushes with a 5-8 knot vengeance. They had to have been good sailors who had learned their lessons from the Fundy-like tides in the Bay of St. Malo in Brittany, the home of Cartier, by the way. They even knew how to use the tides to their advantage; i.e., use them as protection against unwanted intruders. At ebb tide their bay was safe, nobody could get in. The ebb flow would act like a gate. Their later camp at Port Royal, Nova Scotia, by the way, had the same tidal set-up, with Digby Gut keeping out intruders for nearly 12 hours each day.

The second plus point for establishing a colony here, as I see it, was the fact that Passamaquoddy Bay is huge, with lots of lobes, and that means lots of shoreline. It is wooded and yet is conveniently interspersed with shoaling sandy, or at least gravelly,

beaches. It abounds with fish, seal, porpoise, duck, clams, and mussels and the woods look promising for game and their fur trade. The fog also mostly hangs around like a thick shroud on the open Bay of Fundy, again making it hard for intruders to find. Yet another plus point for the intrepid sailors, they had done their homework.

St. Croix Island itself also looked very promising. There was good anchoring and landing and a higher field for the settlement with lookout point. The settlers could feel safe on their island and shore was real close on all sides. It was a natural fort in more than one sense.

So What Went Wrong?

In August the supply ships left for France, leaving the settlers full of hope to make a go of their venture. According to Champlain's drawing of the place, they started building a real settlement with roads, houses, church, and gardens, all surrounded by a palisade fence. The model in the present park looks real cozy and promising. So why did the settlement fail, all on its own, in less than a year? What went wrong? They were great sailors, but where is their basic mental miscalculation?

All literature I have read on their failure points to the especially harsh winter that year or blames it on the cold north wind in that region. The settlers' miscalculation must have been much greater to cause such havoc among the 79 men. And then it came to me. They were sailors at heart, very good ones at that, and in those days sailors navigated and thought in latitudes, north/south reference points. They knew most of the latitudes of most of the bigger harbor cities in Europe and beyond by measuring the angle from the horizon to the North Star, the "Guide Star" for the North Atlantic. Up here in Maine, for example, the North Star is quite high in the sky, while looking at the same star from the Everglades makes it appear to have risen just above the treeline.

In early navigation, relative north/south fixes were determined by the angle between the horizon and a fixed star, like our North Star. Longitudinal fixes, on the other hand, remained guesswork until sailors got more or less accurate chronometers, and they weren't invented until 1714. East/ west fixes, as you may remember from any navigation class you may have taken, are based on the course of the sun; i.e., are time related, with Greenwich, England, being the mathematical point of departure, the "trans polar equator," if you want to picture it that way.

Latitudinal Thinking

So here is my reconstruction of their thought process. St. Croix Island, according to their correct measurement, is at about 45 degrees north, halfway between the North Pole and the equator which, to a Frenchman would put it into the wine growing region of Bordeaux (also at 45 degrees north), or right in the middle of the Gulf of Venice in the Adriatic Sea in Italy, a very familiar latitude for Europeans. What a climate, they must have thought. No problem! From their new home on St. Croix Island they could row over to the nearby shores and fetch water from the rivers or streams and go hunting and trapping all winter. Saltwater just does not freeze, definitely not near Bordeaux or Venice, right?



St. Croix Island on the horizon.



This was the place.

So close to the mainland, yet so far in winter.



But it did, and with a 19' tide this was not solid ice but shifting pack ice, impossible to traverse. They were trapped on their own island, held hostage by the winter, and slowly starved and froze to death when their supplies ran out. Their diet was also missing one important ingredient, vitamin C, like in oranges, lemons, and limes, which the "Limeys" (British sailors) learned first, but also not until 1753.

Many settlers on the island were weakened or struck down by scurvy. This was a major miscalculation for which they paid dearly, 35 of the 79 settlers died and 20 more had to be nursed back to health when the supply ships returned the following June.

How did it happen? In 1604, people had no idea that 45 degrees latitude on the western Atlantic shore is not the same as on the eastern, the European side of that ocean. Nowadays most Americans know, for example, that living in Maine is quite different from living in Washington State. Maine has a cold, continental climate while Washington State is majorly influenced by the ocean to its west. The same is true for the comparison of Maine with Bordeaux in southern France, or Venice. The latter European places are heavily influenced by the ocean, like Washington State, and the Gulf Stream in particular.

With our easterly drift of weather systems you would thus encounter a very cold climate in Maine, (caused by a huge land mass to the west which cools very rapidly) and a climate affected by a much slower cooling ocean in Washington State or in France. Furthermore, if early ocean travelers noticed the Gulf Stream on their way over, or heard about it from early explorers or fishermen, they must have thought it should have a much more significant effect along the shores from which it originated than on the distant European shore.

So you see, according to their knowledge, they had everything planned just right,

but in the spring of 1605 they knew they had made a bad mistake choosing an island in a tidal bay that freezes up, and knew they had to leave and try again somewhere else.

I admire those guys for being quick learners. It was not the north wind or a specially cold winter, as some people still maintain 400 years later. No, there was a basic flaw in their thinking for which, however, they cannot be blamed. It was the climate! But even if they did not quite understand the reasons for the surprisingly cold Maine winter, they knew they had to get out of there and try again somewhere else, on shore this time, which they eventually did.

What Now?

So they scouted the entire coast south to Cape Cod, but decided in the end to return to one of their first stops, another tidal inlet off the Bay of Fundy, up through tide-ridden Digby Gut, Nova Scotia, again for protection. So they packed up whatever they could, loaded it onto the two supply ships, which returned as arranged in late June the next year, and sailed up to the mouth of the Annapolis River. They called their new settlement Point Royal.

From there the Acadians moved to other enclaves in Nova Scotia, along the Gulf of St. Lawrence in New Brunswick, the southwest shore of Prince Edward Island, up the St. John River, and yes, to other parts of Maine, also. They were a very peaceful, pious, and accommodating people until the British so rudely, even crudely, deported them between 1755-1778 in an effort at ethnic cleansing. The Acadians were driven out of their homes by the thousands, shipped back to France or expelled, and finally resettled wherever they were welcome, including Louisiana, where they established their new "Cajun" (Acadian) culture, language, and lifestyle. (Try to, remember Longfellow's poem *Evangeline* from your high school days, and you will know what I am talking about).

Model of Champlain's drawing of the settlement.



The 400 Year Celebration

Driving up towards St. Croix Island this June, 2004, I was not surprised to see road signs pointing to "DOWN EAST AND ACADIA." The closer I got to this historic place, I found a new, very well-appointed little park at Red Beach in Maine, on Route #1 about 10 miles SE of Calais/St. Stephen, right across from the island. I loved looking at the model of the settlement (I have always loved models, ever since I was a kid) and pictured myself in it taking notes, recording events, and most of all charting everything I saw, like Champlain, you guessed it. There were lots of explanatory tablets and life-sized statues of settlers in the woods watching me as I took the self guided tour.

On the other side of the bay (on the Canadian side), off the route to St Andrews, there is a much bigger Information Center explaining the significance of St. Croix Island for Canada. As a matter of fact, the Canadian Maritimes were caught in a festive frenzy this past summer. Celebrations with Acadian music, dancing, food, and lots of tricolor flags accentuated by the gold star of the Acadians were all planned. Halifax even sported an international tall ships parade on July 29-August 2.

Technically St. Croix Island is in U.S. waters, but the landing of the Acadians on these shores is truly an international historic event and the two visiting centers on either side of the border are worth visiting and reflecting about, even if you are not of Acadian descent.

Champlain soon thereafter led his own exploratory trips, still in search of a sea way to China. Yes, trade was the motor of exploration in those days. There were no agencies and grants to finance a research trip. It had to be self-paying in the long run. Champlain soon sailed up the St. Lawrence River in search of the Great Lakes, which he also did not find on his first attempt. But what is important is that he persevered and eventually found and described the Great Lakes. He also founded the City of Quebec in 1608. What a guy! I see in him the real leader of the group, and were it not for his trip logs we would not even know about the failed first attempt of a French settlement on a tiny island in the St. Croix River, and without his charts we would still be bickering about the border between Canada and the U.S. in this neck of the woods.

Salute to the Acadians!

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The Great Hunter's Big Rescue

By Robert Jacobs

This tale is one in which two fools bumble about in kayaks, but really begins some time before that so a bit of exposition is in order. My in-laws got them a boat, dad nab it, and not one of them sissy hand powered ones. No sirree, they got them odd teen feet of 401 Rambler powered tri hull, boy. Let's just say I got wetter in it than in my kayak, and I've never had to change a fuel pump on my sissy boat.

Okay, that's harsh for harshness sake because the boat is a kick in the aft and the wake from that sucker can ski a small army and surf a flotilla of 'yaks (if you can catch the wake, that is). The other great thing about the big tub is it drags us to the lake, too, and I get to paddle. This particular day found a nice wind chop with "seas" of 1'-3', punctuated by the ubiquitous Personal Wiener Crafts and enormous cabin cruisers stuffed to the flying bridges with horsies (power, that is). All this added up to a fun day out in my brand new, paper skinned, West Greenland style kayak.

Launch day really happened a few weeks prior in VaVa's (Portuguese granny) pool because I didn't really want to be surprised in open water and her pool is big enough to take a few strokes in and turn around. This boat was constructed using no preset molds or patterns, almost entirely by eye, which doesn't make a special in any way, just unpredictable. I was pretty sure I would get what I got, and I was right, I did.

She is glorious! She slices through the water as if I knew what I were doing. I took a few tentative laps within the no wake buoys, commencing my hunt for flotsam and (mostly) jetsam. It never ceases to amaze me when people casually toss chip bags and soda cans in the water or on the beach, both actions usually followed by a 30mph blitz back across the lake, kiddies dragging along in an over inflated tube. So, being as I have a hunting kayak (or two), I hunt the waste of the masses. My spray skirt makes a nice "lap" in which to place Evian bottles and Ziploc bags.

On lap two a sleek, yellow rocket of a modern touring kayak passed by, fully rigged. He had about every juju possible to strap on a kayak lashed to that baby beneath a labyrinth of shock cord resembling SpiderMan's twisted drunken prank. Feeling slightly intimidated by this cat, I nonetheless began working my way downwind toward him, noting my bow may be a tad deep, biting a little harder than I might like. He noticed me and turned so we rafted up and commenced to have us a good old fashioned "gam."

Then he fell over. Just, "Nice day, how long you been..." bloop, underwater. I immediately thought my new pal was demonstrating his rolling technique and inwardly squirmed at my absolute lack of anything other than what I refer to as a "terror roll." As I sat there, continuing to stare at the belly of this yellow beast, my new pal ottered up on the other side. Within moments my paddle was stashed under a deck line, as if I knew what I were doing, and I offered assistance.

My unruffled pal denied help and proceeded to attempt (and re-attempt) a wet rescue.

Meanwhile, I am offering my support of his boat, which offers very little initial stability (or secondary, or any stability, for that matter) without the gyroscope effect of a body in the bottom, and began developing ulcers concerning my own possible imminent capsize. Eventually my companion had to sling a leg over my bow, then slide over onto/into his own boat. Much pumping ensued as we began to converse, finally. I discovered that he was newer to kayaking than I but had garnered a sweet deal on this package, turnkey so to speak, and took a few classes about technique.

He asked the ubiquitous questions about my own boat and odd looking paddle and we began to paddle against the wind, towards my family. It was then that I noticed we had drifted about a half-mile downwind and around a cove while performing our aquabatics routine. I also noticed that with the lake as low as it was (but the golf courses are green) there were a lot more sticks poking up around here than a thin skinned fella like me appreciates. And then it happened...

Some drowned tree reached up and poked me right in the buttocks. Well, he knocked on my bow first, but then rang the doorbell on my right cheek. I thought nothing of it for a few minutes, then I noticed my shorts felt a little damp, so I checked my skirt connection and shooed all the accumulated water off it. It seemed that the wet was, amazingly, getting wetter. Luckily this straight jacket for the legs allows you to reach right under there and scratch like a ball player, but there was no luck where my finger lit. Ragged paper and just a smidgen of cotton short greeted my suddenly panicked fingers. All I could think about was the unfortunate Inuit hunter who found himself in this same predicament, only miles from the nearest icy sliver of shore. My blood turned cold.

I passed on my discovery and now my rescuer became my escort/rescuer. I noticed, though, in both incidents how keen this cat was to abandon ship and catch a tow, first course of action he thought of. Now my boat has no empty space, every available crevice not occupied by my gangly form is stuffed with nylon sacs full of my breath. The point is, even with all the water it can hold this baby ain't going down, disintegration is another matter altogether.

Periodic checks below the waterline gave respite from my furious paddling (including a few strokes that caught so hard I nearly pulled myself out of the boat), so furious, in fact, that I erased all doubts of its effectiveness in the eyes of my new pal. The beach hove into sight and I relaxed a little, slowed my cadence, and began offering respite to my escort. He duly denied, claiming a wife of his own, and paddled away. We shouted mutual contact info and hopefully I'll see him again. If not, I'm pretty sure he'll never forget the day the Great Hunter saved him and almost sunk his new paper boat.

Precision 18

Displacement 1100 lbs.

Ballast, Lead 350 lbs.

Sail Area 145 sq. ft.

Draft, Bd Down 4'3"

Draft, Bd Up 1'6"

LOA 17'5"

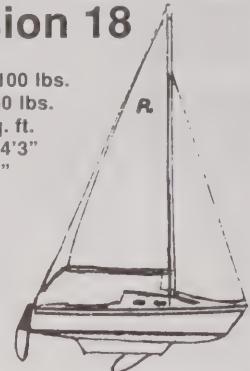
LWL 15'5"

Beam 7'5"

15' C.B.

16'-0" B.K.

18' - 21' - 23'



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The Mercury Class Sloop was designed in 1936 by the Munos Brothers of Sausalito, California, for San Francisco Bay racing. It was a kit boat, designed of modest materials including fir plywood, spruce spars, a graceful lead, and fir deadwood keel with trailing rudder and has an 18' hull that's just plain gorgeous.

When our family moved from the Bay Area to San Diego in 1960, my dad and his brother, both Monteville, Connecticut Yankees, were drawn to an old Mercury sitting proudly on a home-built wooden trailer in Coronado. My dad had the little bit of money and my uncle had the sailing skills to acquire and actually operate this entry into the world of sailing. I was 15 when I first laid eyes on her. Dad named her *Sandot* after my younger sister, Sandy, and my mom, Dorothy. She changed my life.

Sailing with my dad and uncle for the first time showed me her grace and elegance. Sailing with them the second time, when my uncle was pretty well wasted and a stiff autumn breeze was howling over the tops of the ground swells off Point Loma, showed me her stamina. I will never forget that awakening and understanding that something so beautiful could also take so much stress. I would grow up to appreciate the diversity of purpose that little boat demonstrated to me, in more ways than just sailing.

When I got my driver's license at 16, I could visit her on my own and sail San Diego Bay, Mission Bay, and the turquoise, golden, kelp-filled ocean out towards the Coronado Islands some 20 miles away without worry (don't tell my mom). At least I didn't worry. Coming in with a slow, 3' ground swell at my stern, nearly surfing at a beam reach, was magic. My high school girlfriend didn't like sailing that much because it messed up her hair. That's another story to go along with my '53 Chevy convertible.

Years later, after all the growing up, going to college, getting married, starting a family and career, unexpected divorce, child raising aftermath, and rediscovering the same, simple me as a person stuff, I ran across another old Mercury in Eugene, Oregon, where I have lived since 1977. My best buddy, Garry, and I bought her in 1985 as partners and built our continued friendship around her in many ways. She's named *Tribute*.

I don't know why or how she got that name, but it was monumental to me. My father was then retired, having been divorced, sold the old *Sandot*, and then remarried my mother after a reconciliation. A tribute to their staying power through adversity, for whatever reasons they conjured up at the time and throughout the many odd years that followed. Also, it was the name of my favorite Jack Lemmon movie, *Tribute*, which always reminded me of my father. He looked like Jack but still acted like a stubborn, Connecticut Yankee in everything he did, but with a heart of gold. My father has been gone for five years now and my best friend and boat partner, Garry, was recently taken away by a heart attack at the tender age of 54, but I still have *Tribute* and have loved, sailed, bragged about, shown off, and cared for her for nearly 20 years now.

My son moved back to town following his marital separation and he and I have sailed many times on *Tribute*, talking about our life experiences and the changes we both have

A Tribute To A Plywood Boat

By John Lawless



faced in our lives, and spun warm yarns about his grandfather and my buddy, Garry. Our most important recent voyages have included my grandson, who was nearly seven at the time of this story. He loves sailing, the water, and mostly just being around his dad and me who, next to Spiderman and Batman, are his favorite super heroes.

Last summer we had an extraordinary sail aboard *Tribute*. Summer sailing on Fern Ridge Reservoir, northwest of Eugene, is usually moderate, fairly predictable, and highly enjoyable. This particular afternoon we left the dock with a typical 8-10kt wind from the northwest and spent nearly two hours towing my grandson, wing and wing, across the lake to a favorite swimming beach cove. I don't know of a time when his dad and I had more fun watching this guy in the water simply being dragged behind our little sailboat at the end of a dock line. We grounded the boat on the gently sloping gravel bottom and swam some more as the wind suddenly shifted and picked up from the west.

Within ten minutes we were starting to see whitecaps and wind swells of 2'-3' heading our way from across the five-mile wide lake. We dragged her off the bottom and headed out into the wind, beating, to get home quickly. The breeze continued to build to about 25kts and the swells began to peak and trough at 3'-4' high off our port bow. This is just the kind of weather and water conditions the Mercury was designed to sail in with her San Francisco Bay racing heritage, though I had rarely seen it on our little lake. We had

two miles to go, beating into an increasing wind, and we were both excited and apprehensive, as sailors should be, with our precious cargo of a father, son, and grandson on board. The little guy was oblivious at first, still shivering from three hours in the water, and just wanted to be dragged behind the boat some more because now it was going fast!

As we pounded through the middle, and most exposed, part of the lake for the next half hour, the break of the bow from trough to peak sent thick sheets of water over the deck, high up onto the jib and main, and over the coamings. Within minutes we had taken on a foot of water and the rail was still buried. The Mercury loves to heel, but laying the deck under water to the coamings is a bit freaky in a boat with no flotation. All our gear was awash and my son and I made frequent jokes about the mess between regular dousings to lighten our mutual consternation over the situation and the safety of our young third mate.

I had beautiful new sails made a couple of years ago and had told the sail maker that reefing points weren't needed in our sailing environment. I still don't think they are. We could have dropped the jib immediately, but we didn't. It was just too exciting and my son and I are pretty darned good sailors, but I had never pushed *Tribute* this far before so we kept going, spilling some wind from the main, hiking out our combined 400-plus pounds as far as we could to keep the water from pouring in over the leeward combing, and minding our attitudes around the little mate, who by now started to show some signs of concern. Primal instincts at work.

With a mile to go, we had passed through the unprotected open waters of the lake and began to see a lessening of the waves. The wind, however, stayed up and became very fluky with knockdown gusts from changing angles bent from behind the surrounding hills. Our predictable jokes about the splash from the swells changed to impromptu nervous laughs followed with what might otherwise be newly invented swear words unsuitable for our innocent companion. The tempo of our adventure changed dramatically as my son and I hauled and released and hiked and retreated to keep our little boat upright, in spite of our hefty 600-lb. lead keel reaching a mighty 3'4" into the depths of the lake to compensate for the unpredictable gusts.

That's when I really started studying the mast and shrouds. That spindly little mahogany jumper strut, not more than 1/2" square at its tips and stayed with copper wire windings, was rebuilt by Garry, who was a master woodcrafter, ten years ago, and the windward spreader, not that much more stout, under the stress of guitar string tuned stays, still working as designed and now protecting us from a possible dismasting. I gave her a quiet pat on the hull and said, "Good girl" in a different way than I said the same words to my cat that morning. Nevertheless, my intention was the same. Don't forsake me and my most important companions. She didn't.

Within the hour we rounded the docks of the Eugene Yacht Club on the point, still heading up to reach our slip at the county marina beyond, and things finally settled down a bit. The gusts and shifts were still all around us, though not quite as severe, so our hearts lightened as we neared our safe destination at the end of the C Dock. At this point,

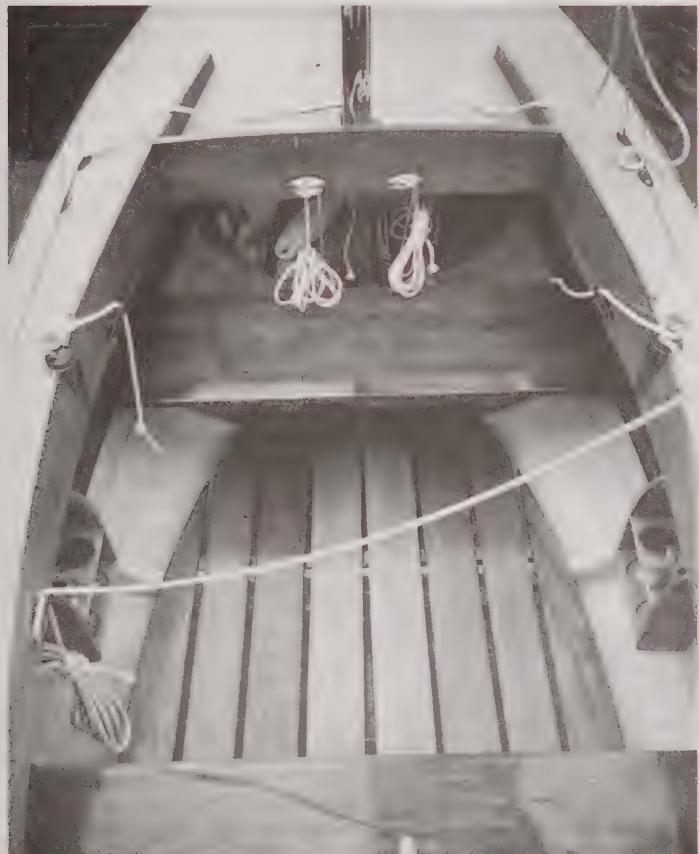
my grandson refreshed his exuberance, in trade for the momentary reserve he both felt and displayed over our recent adventure. It gave me a benchmark to evaluate how far we had pushed things this seemingly mild afternoon of sailing in our little, beautiful, capable, and worthy plywood boat. I will never forget the combination of feelings I had that day, relaxed joy, exhilaration, concern, fear, pride, and accomplishment.

I'm not a risk taker, like some of you salts, but this was a little test on our little lake, in our little plywood boat, that changed all three of our lives, and I thank *Tribute* for her noble contribution to our adventure. I realized that afternoon what serious sailors have known in their hearts forever, it is only the build of their craft and the skill of their crew that keeps their most precious cargo safe in nature's world. I felt like we were an acceptable crew, but I know *Tribute* did more than her share to bring our family home safely that day.



About This Plywood Boat

Tribute was built in 1948, the same year I was, and she got dry rot before I did, as the joke goes. And the dry rot was only in the cedar chine strip, not the plywood, which is still in perfect condition. So, take that into consideration, look at the photos I sent along, and you tell me if this little boat isn't a tribute to plywood.



At least one of the jackleg experiments on the Rescue Minor has proven to be successful. That's the little Surflo® diaphragm water pump that I adapted to run directly off the camshaft of the engine. It works good. I know I have explained my prejudices against conventional marine cooling methods used in recreational vessels before, but there might be some who came in late or chose to overlook one of those sections because there was so much actual entertainment elsewhere in the magazine.

Which, I think I have figured out why so many people read my nonsense in here. I am afraid that it is not because I am such a good writer and think I know so dadblamed much about every little thing. I believe it is because there are some people who just like to read. When they were little children, they sat at the breakfast table and read the cereal box. Now that they are grown, they read the fool newspaper. No telling what all they have in the bathroom...maybe the *AARP Journal* for Christ's sake...*Reader's Digest*...child please. Pleasantville has recycled the old "Humor in Uniform" jokes as many times as little children did the Little Lu Lu jokes (Little Lu Lu was swinging on the swing and her friend said, "Little Lu Lu, you better not swing so high or the little boys will see your panties." Little Lulu just smiled...she knew she didn't have on any panties).

Anyway, quality of literature has nothing whatsoever to do with what gets read. It is just a habit and is driven mostly by convenience and this magazine comes right to the mailbox every two weeks (more or less). It is kind of like how someone might read the same AARP story about elder sex twice because it is inconvenient to get up off the toilet and go hunt for a Hammacher Schlemmer catalog.

Anyway, despite the nature of the reading addiction, I'll condense my marine cooling prejudices down to the bitter essence. I think that the engineers who work for the marine engine companies were told to make damn sure that marine engines did not live as long as they would if, say, they were pulling a welder or air compressor. People who run engine driven welders and air compressors are trying to make a little money, where people who run marine engines are trying to spend it. I think it is good for industries to take consumer preferences into consideration when they design equipment but, though I like to run marine engines, I don't like to spend money, so I have had to re-engineer every engine I ever had anything to do with.

Usually the safeguards built into these things prevent me wielding a free hand (I have not been able to figure out how to convert an outboard motor to cool itself with a foot full of antifreeze circulated by a centrifugal pump on the drive shaft...yet) but there are a few things that I can do to circumvent modern marine engineering and bring it to what I consider acceptable.

You know, there are marine engines which people run to try to make a little money. They are not set up like the MerCruiser on the Bayliner and are not cooled by salt water sucked in by a treacherous rubber impeller pump. Even if the seawater goes through a heat exchanger instead of directly into the water passages of the engine, the situation is treacherous because not only are heat exchangers cheap made out of dissimilar metals, there is still that treacherous raw water

Rescue Minor Exhaust Water Pump Update

By Robb White

pumping situation. Working boat engines are cooled by antifreeze circulated through a "keel cooler" by the same kind of cast iron water pump found on semi trucks (and welders) and even automobiles. On steel vessels this keel cooler is just a box section of "C" channel welded inside the plates of the bottom of the boat.

It works fine. No salt water is ever invited into the boat and the engine doesn't even know what salt is. Of course, there is no discharge to cool the exhaust so all the main engines and auxiliaries have to poot up out of the roof. On a steel vessel this isn't really a problem. After the paint gets burnt off where the pipe comes out it just gets a little rusty, but that ain't nothing but a thing. On wood boats they have to make a wide flange so no hot metal can get close enough to set the boat afire (the exhaust temperature of a properly loaded, turbocharged diesel engine is around 700° F).

I don't actually approve of dry exhaust systems in small boats unless the engine is sitting naked in the bilges pooting up a straight pipe right there in plain sight. For one thing, cooling the engine room in a boat is essential. No boatbuilding material, except metal, likes to attain the temperature the engine thermostat is set at and stay like that for days at a time. It is usually not a problem to circulate enough air to cool the engine room. For one thing, the engine itself hauls its own displacement's worth of new air through there every time it completes an intake cycle. For another, convection works real well in a confined environment.

On the Rescue Minor there is a little dorade under the port side seat for the intake air and another on top of the engine box to let it out. There is an electric biscuit fan in the intake but even when it burns up from inhalation of salt air, as it frequently does, it is easy to feel warm (not hot) air coming from the output even when the engine is running wide open. The only reason I maintain the biscuit fan at all is so I can tell when the key is switched on so I won't wander off and run the battery down through the alternator rectifiers after I anchor the boat.

It is possible to insulate a dry exhaust so that it doesn't add much heat to the engine room. In the olden days the best insulation was asbestos fibers mixed in something like plaster of Paris. We used to smear it on the whole exhaust system including the muffler (?) and manifold of tugboat engines with our hands. "Lagging" the exhaust was sort of an art form among the blue collar class of marine engineers (that's the seagoing men who have to straighten out the design flaws of the land bound, white collar class of the same name). We used to try to avoid having some other engineer say, "You know, you couldn't plaster Annette's titties!"

Despite the current asbestos horror, where all those people eventually found out that they couldn't work in a shingle factory

for 30 years breathing all that dust without getting sick, I don't believe asbestos clutches, brakes, and exhaust lagging killed all that many people, but that's just my in-expert, un-researched medical opinion. Now, exhaust lagging is made of fiberglass mixed with the same plaster and it works pretty good...it is sort of aggravating because the chopped fibers get in your hands while you are smearing and the end result is irritating because the glass fibers do not get limp when they get wet and lie down like asbestos so, while you are trying to change injectors on the engine, your belly gets et up by the bristles on the manifold lagging.

You can't put another thin layer of plaster on there to cover up the bristles because it'll slough off. About the only thing we found that works is to paint the thing with about eleven coats of latex paint, which is a royal pain in the ass. Which I am going to close this fascinating subject right now.

Why in hell, one may ask, didn't I direct my scrambled genius to finding out a way to insulate the damned exhaust on Rescue Minor and braze up a cute little bronze flange to keep from scorching the gold leaf on the transom so I could run it dry like somebody with some sense would do? I like the sound of wet exhaust, that's why. There are a bunch of shrimp boats running the exact same engine I have in the Rescue Minor pulling a generator and pooting dry up about an inch and a quarter pipe. They sound like hell...worse than a 4-108 Perkins.

Anyway, the little Surflo® sure works good. The reason I didn't rig up a belt driven Jabsco pump is because I don't trust them. The only reason people use them in marine applications is because they are self priming above the waterline. That is, they are self priming if it doesn't take more than about 30 seconds to get the water to them. If it takes longer than that, they are self-destructing. The little wings of the impeller shear off in the unlubricated holes and become lodged in the inlet and output pipes unless the parts get chewed up little enough to pass through and lodge in the water passages of the cylinder head...I don't trust them.

The best pump is a regular rigid impeller centrifugal pump like on an automobile or industrial engine. They'll self prime, too, if there isn't much head and they are running about 3,000rpm, but that will pump way too much water for exhaust (or even engine) cooling purposes. You know, if you have too much exhaust water it'll make enough back pressure to affect the performance of the engine and exhaust restriction is ruinous to turbocharged diesel engines. I hate to drop back into scientific jargon so I won't, but there is a name for how much cooking it takes to evaporate water and it takes a hell of a lot to do very little. Any Boy Scout can tell you that. All you need is enough exhaust cooling water to make enough of a fine spray out the tailpipe for a little rainbow when the boat is running wide open.

The Surflo® runs at half engine speed directly off the camshaft of the engine and pumps just exactly the right amount of water. It is a very reliable little pump and is self priming and will run dry indefinitely. That's why I chose it. Because it is a diaphragm pump, there are no rotating parts in the water to get sheared off and stop up anything...and its valves act as check valves and keep water

in the system when the boat is hauled out on the trailer (which has killed many a Johnson, Sherwood, or Jabsco rubber impeller pump).

The only thing I found out that I did wrong with the initial installation was to assume that it could pump trash like a hand operated diaphragm style bilge pump (the big, antique, bronze Edson is my favorite...it'll pass a good sized rag). The little valves in the Surflo® (there are other brands just as good but farm supply stores don't carry them for \$39.95) are too small to pass much sea grass. Because I was in a hurry, the first filter I used was just a regular little automotive, in line fuel filter, but it was designed for petroleum products and the fibers of the filter material swole up in water and cut off the flow. Now I have a big (2-5/8" x 5") pleated polyester filter housed in an oversized, clear, acrylic housing that allows me to look in at what's going on and will hold at least a pint of sand and trash. I have had no trouble in the two years since I put that thing on there. Knowing what I know, though, I have some redundancies. One is a new Surflo® with the electric motor still on the stern and the other is the wonderfully reliable old Par diaphragm pump, which is also electric. I know, I know, electricity on boats should be thought of only as a convenience and never trusted. I also have a little, plastic, Chinese hand operated bilge pump and a very reliable mechanical wife to work it if all else fails.

I have had no trouble at all (knock wood) with the actual engine cooling system. The regular automotive style centrifugal pump on the engine pumps antifreeze through a 1" copper tubing "U" brazed onto a 3" wide, 3' long 1/4" thick copper plate that is mounted flush with the bottom of the boat. Though the tubing is up above the plate, and theoretically out of circulation, the plate is not attached into its keel box in a watertight way and, since the exhaust water is extracted from that box, I guess there is some circulation but I bet the copper conducts heat well enough so that if the box was dry the plate would cool the engine. Anyway, it runs cool enough so that the inlet pipe to the engine is touchable and the thermostat regulates the engine temperature, which is as it should be.

I have a little story about a belt driven Jabsco that I decided not to insert directly into the above narrative so as to preserve a hint of continuity to the thing. One time we were anchored up out on the flats out of sight of land off the mouth of the St. Marks River with two loaded barges of gasoline waiting for the tide when we saw somebody waving a flashlight out in the ocean. Despite how much trouble it was, we unloosened the wires and unmade the tug from the after barge and went to rescue this person or persons.

It turned out to be a little shrimp boat manned by one semi frantic individual. He was broke down and didn't know what to do. Our initial plan (after we had towed him back to the barges) was to just tow him into the tank farm when we went, but the tide was still a long way away and he stank so bad and talked so much that we couldn't stand him in there in the galley where some of us were trying to concentrate on a little pinochle game. Besides, he was a chain smoker and had given out so he was bumming...an unacceptable situation in the galley of a seagoing tug that has limited contact with normal lines of supply.

We were all way too polite to abandon this person (whew, I don't know if it was him, his engine room, bilges, or something rotten he had recently eaten, but that was the worst smelling man I ever smelled) to his boat and try to send somebody back to get him when we got in, so the junior engineer was volunteered to fix his boat. When I got down in the engine room (actually just another place in the bilges) I found a Cadillac automobile engine driving the propeller through a regular automotive automatic transmission with the universal joint still on the stern. Because Cadillacs don't have any thrust bearing on the output, the seal and all were et up back there and the bilge was full of automatic transmission fluid

But that wasn't what had stopped the boat. The trouble was a Jabsco pump that he had nailed (yes) to one of the frames of the boat. He had been driving it with a very long and misaligned V-belt. The belt had jumped the sheaves and was wrapped all around the

harmonic balancer (front sheave) of the engine in such a mess that it had to be cut off.

Failure, even under the most adverse circumstances, is unacceptable to the marine engineers of yore, so I got to work. I just about wore out my pocket knife and two or three pairs of pliers, but I finally got the damned belt off of there good enough so the engine could be turned over by the starter (there was no charging system or fan or anything...only that one belt). I re-nailed the water pump and spliced up a section of 3/8" black plastic line for a belt and got enough water to cool the engine at a medium idle and we sent that man on his stinking way..

We saw that same boat out there working (?) on the flats after we got pumped off and were heading back for another load. I know he hadn't had time to go to town and get another belt. Shrimp were high back then and I don't think he even went in. I wonder how long that crab trap warp belt held up.

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Epoxy Knowhow

By Dave Carnell

Invisible Butt Joints

In 1978 I first used a plywood butt joint of fiberglass cloth and epoxy resin to avoid having to make a scarf joint (not easy and loses length) or use butt blocks (hard to work around). The joint is so thin that careful feathering of the edges makes it invisible.

In 1986 I wrote about the joint in *Small Boat Journal*. About the same time "Dynamite" Payson wrote in *Boatbuilder* about a similar joint concept. Years later I discovered that Joe Dobler had used the principle well before our publication, as had Jack Chippendale in England.

A piece of plywood bent around the side of a boat is carrying most of the load in its outer and inner plies. The load (stress) on the convex side (usually the outer) is a tension load trying to pull the wood apart. On the concave side (usually the inner), the load is compressive, the wood is being pushed together. The invisible butt joint makes two pieces of plywood one by building a skin of fiberglass and epoxy on each side. When you flex the joint, the load is carried entirely by those two skins you have built.

I made joints in various thicknesses of plywood and tested them by breaking them in flexure with the maximum stress applied at the joint. Joints that passed were ones where the plywood, not the fiberglass epoxy resin, joint broke. My design basis for invisible joints in plywood is: For 1/4" plywood, 1 layer of 6-oz. fiberglass cloth on each side; for 3/8", 2 layers on the top (outside of bend) and 1 layer on the bottom; for 1/2", 3 layers on top and 2 on the bottom; for 3/4", 4 layers on top and 2 on the bottom. Make the first fiberglass strip on top 2" wide and each succeeding one 1" wider. On the bottom side make the first strip 2" wide and the second one (if used) as wide as the widest strip on the top side.

After you lay up the joint, cover it with a piece of 4mil polyethylene film and squeegee or roll it out. This presses the cloth layers together and feathers out the excess epoxy onto the plywood. Peel the film off after the joint cures and the surface is smooth and faired so that very little filling or sanding is required. If you use woven tape instead of pieces cut from cloth, the selvage may make a ridge at each side of the joint.

A joint with a single layer of 6-oz. cloth on each side is about 0.020" thicker than the plywood at its thickest point and tapers off to zero at each side. Two layers on each side adds about 0.030" at the thickest point. The joint in 3/4" plywood with four layers outside and two inside is only about 0.045" thicker at its thickest point.

These joints are designed to use a minimum of material to get the ultimate strength. I would only make them with epoxy resin (not polyester resin) because epoxy bonds the glass cloth to the plywood in a stronger joint that will not peel apart, epoxy will always eventually complete its cure, there is no fire hazard with epoxy, and there is less of a toxic hazard with epoxy.

Originally, both Payson and I made the joint on one side and turned the piece over to complete the joint. The turning over is fraught

with danger of destroying the joint that is very weak at that point. I have gone to laying polyethylene film on a smooth surface, laying the wetted out fiberglass tape (I use cloth to avoid the selvage) on that, epoxy coating the face of the plywood that goes against that, laying the plywood on the wet tape, filling any least void between the plywood edges with thickened epoxy (this is critical as any voids between the butting plywood edges can make the joint weak), epoxy coating the upper plywood joint surface, laying on fiberglass and wetting it out, covering with poly film, laying on a smooth board, and weighting the assembly with concrete blocks. In fact, the last time I did it I laid up a sandwich of two 16' x 20' pieces for the side planks of a sailing skiff and cured them all in one operation.

If you are making joints in plywood thicker than 1/4", make the bottom side of the layup the one with the fewer number of fiberglass strips.

Epoxy In A Nutshell

This is a distillation of my experience in using epoxy for 30 years and improving my techniques. I started using epoxy for boatbuilding in the 1960s, before Gougeon came out with their West System®. I was using generic epoxy from Defender and an amine hardener that was mixed 1:10 with the resin. Later I switched to Epon® resin and Versamid® hardener from an outfit in California. This was a 2:1 mix and easier to use.

Then, as now, all resins and hardeners were made by a few major chemical companies. The companies selling products at retail develop their formulations from commercial products.

Resin and hardener are ingredients that have to be mixed in the correct proportion to cure to a solid with the desired strength and hardness. If you want the mix to cure faster or slower you pick a different hardener. You don't change the mix ratio.

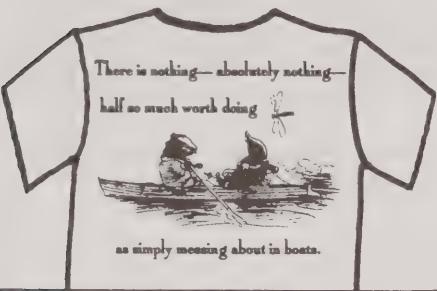
Epoxy is far superior to polyester resin because it sticks to just about all materials, while polyester is not even a reliable adhesive for laminating glass cloth to wood.

If you mix your epoxy in the correct ratio it will eventually cure. If the catalyst you add to polyester does not kick it off, it will never cure.

Epoxy resin and hardeners have shelf lives of many years. I am still using a two-part surplus military epoxy that was manufactured almost 25 years ago. The only exception to unlimited shelf life I have found with epoxy resins is that the hardener for 1:1 mix systems thickens and cannot be used after about a year.

Gluing & Laminating

The most important use of epoxy resin is as glue, including gluing fiberglass to wood. Its advantage over most other glues is that it will fill gaps; in fact, there always has to be some gap. If you clamp too tightly the epoxy will be squeezed out so that the joint will be weak. Adding filler to epoxy used as glue makes stronger joints, perhaps because the filler keeps too much resin from squeezing out of the joint. One-inch boards edge glued will break apart in the joint when it is flexed, add about 20% pulverized limestone or talc and the glued joint breaks in the wood. I add about 10% limestone to resin when laminating fiberglass onto wood, also.



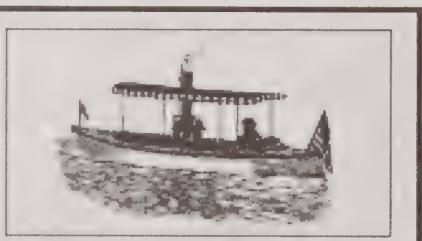
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Fillers

Fillers are added to epoxy resin to make putties for two kinds of uses that have greatly different requirements. Those used for structural joints alone or in combination with fiberglass should be as strong as possible. Putties used for filling and fairing must sand easily.

The best filler for structural uses is pulverized limestone (flour fine, not gritty as ground limestone is). It mixes to a putty that doubles the resin volume and is dense and strong. It is universally available as a fertilizer material at under a nickel a pound. It is a real bear to sand. Portland cement is pretty much equivalent. Talc, another mineral, is as strong and sands easily. It also is thixotropic (the putty does not flow, but will spread). It is available from fiberglass supply houses at around a dollar a pound. For small amounts buy generic baby powder. Check that contents are talc and fragrance.

For filling and fairing applications hollow bead type fillers sand most easily because they are hollow and break. There are three kinds of beads: thermoplastic (Microlight®), which can soften with heat; phenolic, which are usually dark colored; and glass (Scotchlite®), which are white. The glass beads make the lowest density filler and are the lowest cost. White wheat flour from the kitchen is a pretty good filler for finishing putties.

Structural Joints

A fiberglass epoxy butt joint of plywood can be as strong as the plywood itself, see "Invisible Butt Joints" above. Right angle joints in 1/4" plywood for rowing seat boxes, etc. can be made with just a 1/4" radius bead of epoxy putty on the inside of the joint. I tack such a box together with brass brads and then make the epoxy fillet joints. For angle joints such as chines in 1/4" plywood a 1-1/2" fiberglass strip laid over a 1/4" radius epoxy fillet on the inside and a 1-1/2" strip on the rounded outside edge gives a joint that breaks by pulling the plywood apart. Bulkheads secured by a 1-1/2" glass strip over a 1/4" radius epoxy fillet on each side fail in the plywood. All joints must have the weave of the glass cloth filled smooth for maximum strength. Many designs specify much more glass than needed. Make up short specimens of your joints, cure them, and test them in a vise, by standing or jumping on them, or by running your truck over them. If the joint holds and the material breaks, your joint is strong enough.

Safety

The principal hazard of working with epoxy resins is from skin contact. The hardeners are the offenders. As a general rule, the lower the mix ratio the less the hazard (2:1 is less apt to irritate than 4:1), but you should avoid all skin contact and wash thoroughly

after any contact. Wash thoroughly before eating, drinking, or going to the bathroom. Gloves and clothing help protect you, if they are clean.

Encapsulation

You will note that I have not mentioned epoxy encapsulation; i.e., coating both sides of everything with several coats of epoxy resin. It has no advantages and is a waste of money and time that adds useless weight. It won't turn lauan underlayment into marine ply.

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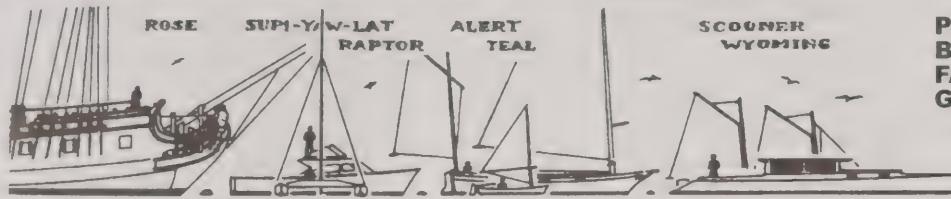
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A couple of issues back we described the Birdwatcher II, our Design #496 B, illustrated with photos of Birdwatcher I, but without any plans of the II. Here are these revised plans, and some more experience with the BW I. The original Birdwatcher design was drawn about 19 years ago. It remains my personal favorite of all my designs, an economical, ultra simple design with economics, ergonomics, and safety that nobody had thought of before, made possible by the invention of strong clear plastic, i.e., polycarbonate.

With a brainstorm based on some rather rare knowledge, I had a boat that weighed 800 lbs., and could easily have been less with a little higher material investment, that could not be capsized by wind, sailed fast including to windward, had space for three adults or two adults and two children to lie down with fair sleeping space and quite a bit of room for their camping gear, could be sailed in strong winds without strenuous exercise, and could be handled in all circumstances from perfectly secure positions (that is, no tethers or even PFDs were needed while sailing and there was freedom to move about in the boat as freely as in an open boat). And it would not need a big car to tow the light craft on that simple unbraked single axle trailer either.

Right up front the uncapsizability needs some qualification. A really big breaking sea can toss any boat over and over, or end over end, and if in that process or by having a hole punched in her in some other way, a lot of free water got inside this boat, her ability to recover would disappear. She would not sink, but would float nearly awash on her side or bottom up. As explained in the earlier article, Birdwatcher II, with hard hatches in place and sandwich construction hull, has more resistance to perforation and thus a flooding incident than Birdwatcher I. That foam adds to her unsinkability, apart from eliminating most condensation potential, and she is further helped in her overall stability by 100 lbs. of ballast in her larger centerboard. Thus we do consider BW II more all around seaworthy than many small craft designed for oceango-

Bolger on Design

Birdwatcher II

Part 2

ing, though she does not have the generous supply carrying capability to be a long distance cruiser for more than one or two crew.

I had written a fictional scenario for *WoodenBoat* magazine, reprinted in my book *Boats With An Open Mind* (McGraw Hill), describing how the boat was supposed to be used and what she was capable of. A few were built, especially a nice one by Jim Michalak, but the idea did not catch on for, I guess, two main reasons. First, most people simply found the claimed stability characteristics of the boat unbelievable. Less than 6" draft, no ballast (few would recognize the 1" thick bottom as ballast), and a 23-1/2' mast? There is no way that boat can right itself from a knockdown!

Secondly, I had made a fetish of the use of oar auxiliary to obviate a motor, pointing out all the irritations and expenses of motors and asking people to make a sporting challenge of learning to do without. I myself have had a fair amount of cruising without mechanical power, most recently (at the time I designed Birdwatcher) in the prototype of the Dovekie Class, which worked well enough to sell 160-odd duplicates (even though the sales brochure showed one option with two stroke jet outboard clamped to her rudder). Birdwatcher was intended to be an improvement on Dovekie plus comparatively fast and cheap for one-off and home builder adaptability.

Apart from a few boats built here and there nothing much happened for 17 or 18 years. We were busy with other matters and had no time to spare for pushing the Birdwatcher concept. Then Mason Smith, the builder of the Adirondack Goodboat in Long Lake, New York, bought the first boat ever built to the design. This hull had been as-

sembled with just plywood and epoxy but without any fiberglass anywhere. In recent years she had apparently been used very little because the wife of her owner said it did not look like a boat and refused to be seen in it. Mason may have had a lifetime of traditional tastes in his choice of personal craft, but he is a thinking man and came to use the boat's capabilities to the full. He is also a writer and he wrote an article about a cruise in the boat which brought out those capabilities so vividly that the editors of *WoodenBoat* magazine were impressed and assigned a photographer to produce suitable shots in Florida for an eight-page feature article.

Faced with the article, we had to grab the chance to upgrade the design, to address the reasons for its (presumed) failure to catch on and otherwise take advantage of the intervening years of experience, as described in the August 1 issue, and more briefly in a sidebar to Mason Smith's essay. Then in an ad hoc joint effort Mason and we were able to demonstrate the boat at the Newport *WoodenBoat* Show on two of the three days.

Finally, we borrowed her to do more testing and to get footage for a video which will be available when we get around to editing it. With some patience on our part, and on the part of the Smith family, we got some convincing material. Her speed and handiness weren't hard to demonstrate, even with Bolger, age 76, weight 155 pounds, and badly out of practice, single handing her. For one sequence we pulled her over past 90 degrees, showing how far from flooding through the open centerline standing room she was, then releasing her to snap upright with a great splash as the bottom came down on the water, roll a little the other way, and settle upright. The speed and force of her self righting was impressive. It was reminiscent of the side launching of a big ship except that she stopped rolling immediately.

We had not had a chance before to test her rowing performance. In spite of the short 7' oars and their far aft location (to enable them to be laid in within the overall breadth of the boat), she went quite well and could

A low drag aerodynamic road rig, the Birdwatcher and minivan.





Shallow draft displays small bow wave and virtually no wake at speed in good breeze.



Breezin' up! That's pretty much 45 degrees of heel with no tendency to keep on going over. However the rudder has lifted clear of the water and Birdwatcher slewed up into the wind until the angle of heel eased and the rudder reconnected with the water.

be maneuvered effectively even with a little wind and with the mast standing. I hope that some people will take advantage of this in addition to our provision of a motor in Birdwatcher II. The motor came hard for me as I liked the idea that it could be dispensed with but, of course, the insistence on motors is not just habit and prejudice, they do substantially increase the options for using a boat. The fact that boats were routinely worked without them for thousands of years, and still can be, ought to be, accompanied by exposure to some of innumerable horror stories of accidents and interminable passages that would not have happened with effective mechanical power!

We had a 350-mile drive to return the boat to Mason and Halley Smith on Long Lake in the Adirondacks. Behind our small minivan with just a 1.81 4-cylinder pulling on the front wheels she had, to our surprise, been perfectly retrievable at our local launching ramp even with one crew left in BW riding up on the old wide roller and cross bunk single axle trailer. Threading the long combination through morning rush hour outside of Boston she felt stable in part, no doubt, due to very good aerodynamics and, of course, her light weight relative to her length. After an initial period of modest right lane speeds, outside the beltway we progressively pushed harder to see what mileage we would realize in express mode with the 1,000 lbs. on the hitch.

In my fiction I had written "fuel mileage is hardly reduced" but that was optimis-

tic, at least when we had to drag it from sea level in Gloucester up to 1,700' feet in the Berkshires, down to the Hudson, and back up into the Adirondacks, averaging 72 mph. At that rate of progress mileage was only 19+ mpg with the boat against 29+ coming back without it. Taking it easy in the right lane on level interstates we might have gotten towards mid-20s. But even on long grades we were never an obstacle to navigation with this modest but comfortable tow vehicle. Four wheel drive does not seem to be a prerequisite for launching and retrieval, nor a V6 or more for fast transit if an occasional 'fire walling' of the gas pedal is not inconceivable. And between her trip from Colorado to New York, then from New York to Florida and back, and all over New England to Rhode Island and Massachusetts she does seem to travel well indeed, making a good travel trailer for overnighting at truck stops.

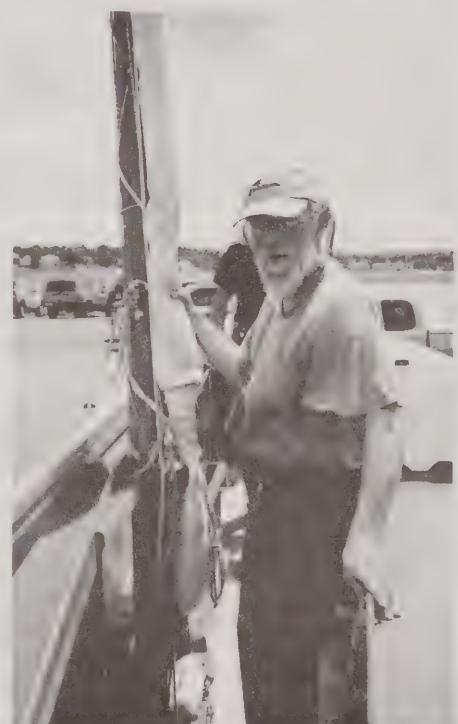
P.S. We would build her with tinted transparencies for better view out forward and in general in lower light conditions.

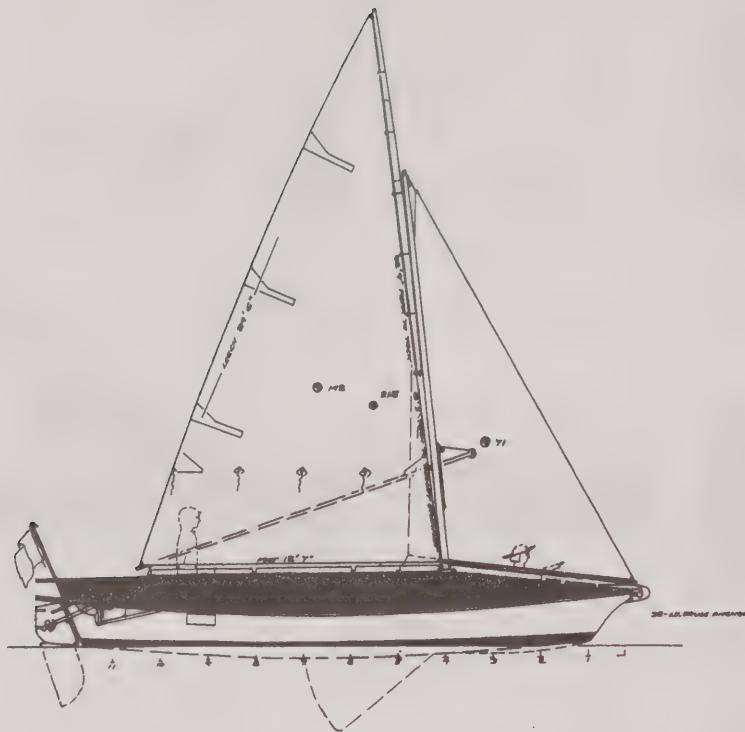
P.P.S. Mason Smith is interested in building either Birdwatcher version to any level of completion.

Plans of Birdwatcher II, our Design #496 B, are available for \$175 to build one boat, sent priority mail, rolled in a tube, from Phil Bolger & Friends, Inc., P.O. Box 1209, Gloucester, MA 01930.

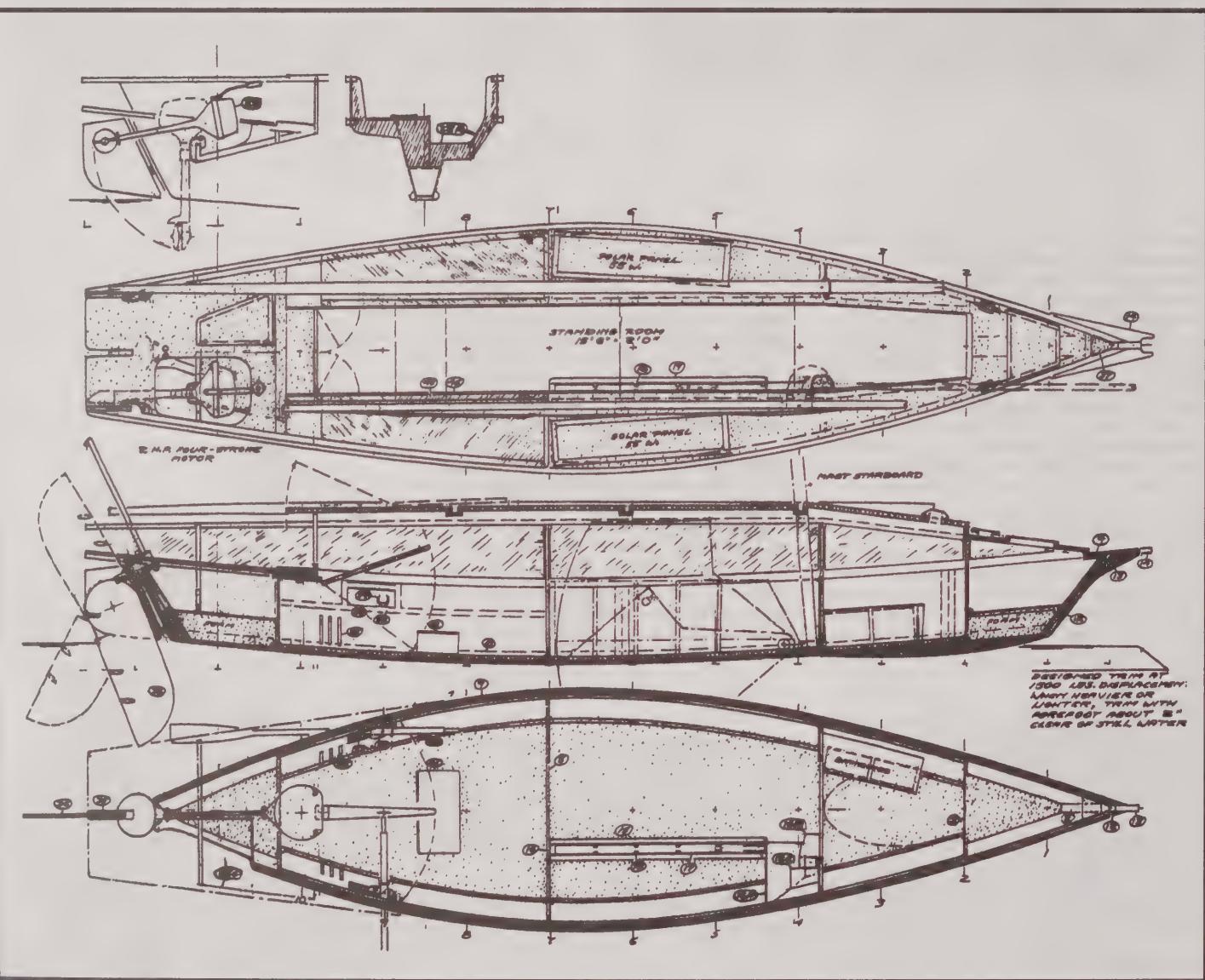
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Maggie of Matakana

A New Zealand Built RC Model
with Chesapeake Bay Schooner
Lines

By Mark Steele



Richard Gross built and sails *Maggie of Matakana* with the Auckland Ancient Mariners model yacht group. She's a gaff rigged schooner that, some readers may share my view, has lines very much like some full size schooners of Chesapeake Bay.

Richard and his wife have a beach house north of Auckland City where the sailing around the Hauraki Gulf is wonderful, and while there he noticed a schooner with clean lines and a very different look about her. That schooner was called *Maggie of Whitford*, the vessel built over many years by Brian Owen, who is Rear Commodore of the Mahurangi Cruising Club. Richard was so taken that he elected to build an RC model of her.

Armed with side panels of the 80' long boat and some very approximate measurements but no frame shapes, using a computer boat design package on free download off the internet provided him with the hull panels in flat format. He then enlarged the plan to his required size, stitched the panels together using copper wire ties, then glued them with resin on the inside, removing the ties before the glue set totally.

Fitting gunwales and deck beams followed, after which the deck was marked with planking and placed and later glued down. The length of the model is 1150mm (1480mm if one includes the bowsprit) and the model carries 3.5kgs of lead on the keel and has an all up weight of 8kgs.

The sails are made of polycotton and the winch sail servo and rudder servo are placed below the deckhouse floor, accessible by lifting the whole floor out. The deckhouse has clear windows and includes a chart table, with detail to the extent of a chart of the Kawau Bay area hand drawn on it!

The model sails beautifully and is one of the prettiest model schooners sailing with the group's fleet that sail every Thursday on Onepoto Lake, just over the Auckland Harbour bridge heading north.



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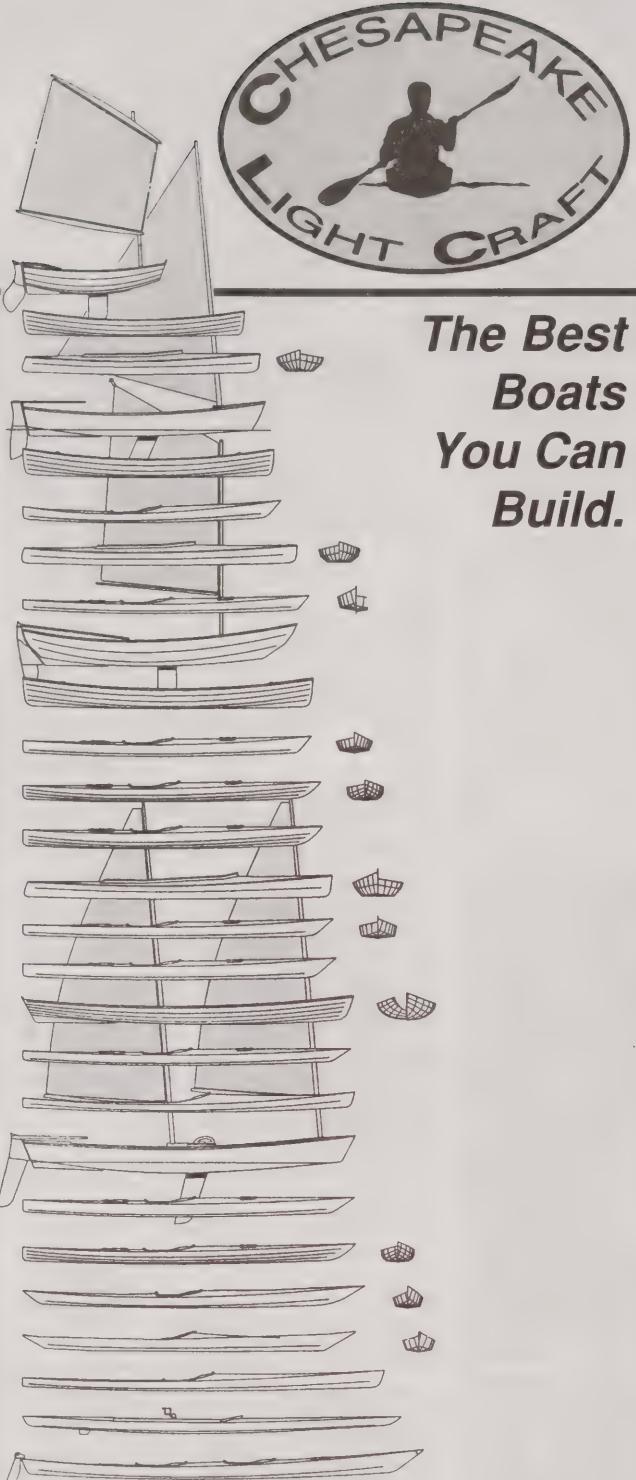
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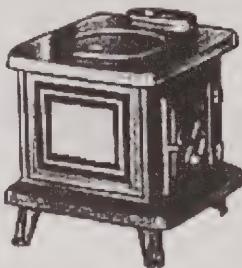
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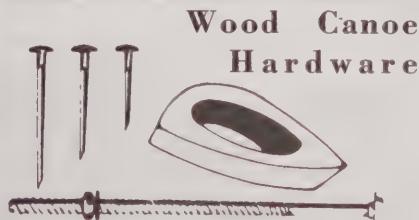
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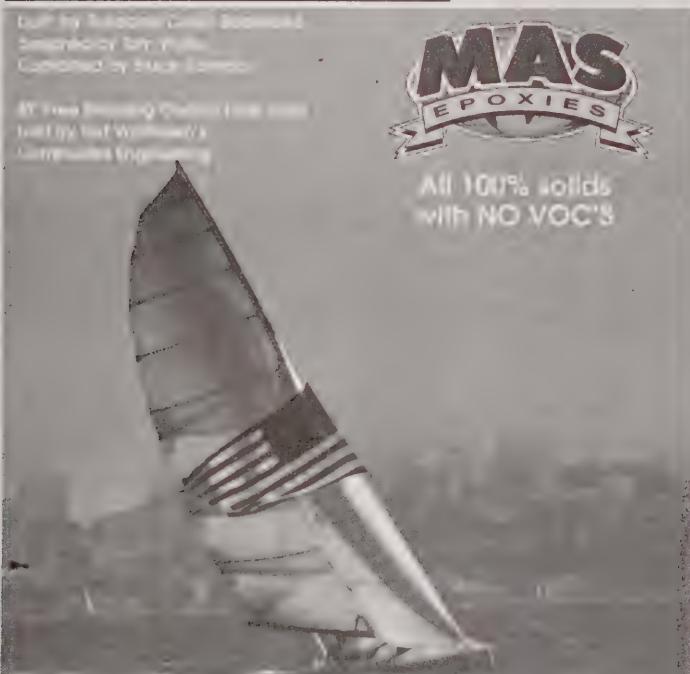
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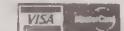


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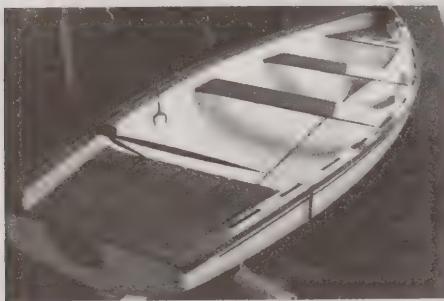
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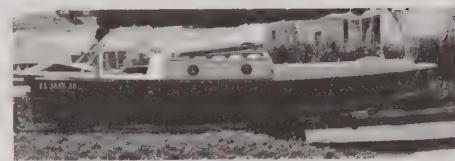
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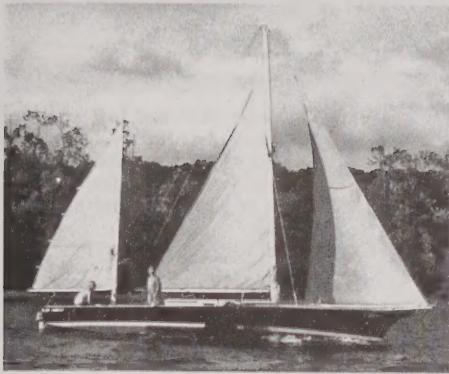
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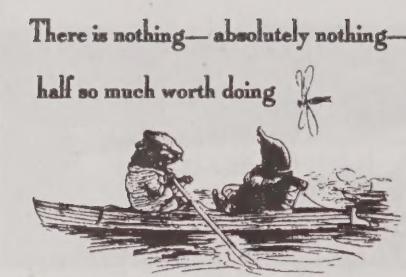
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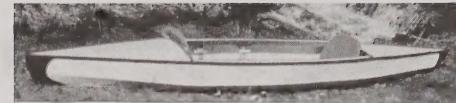
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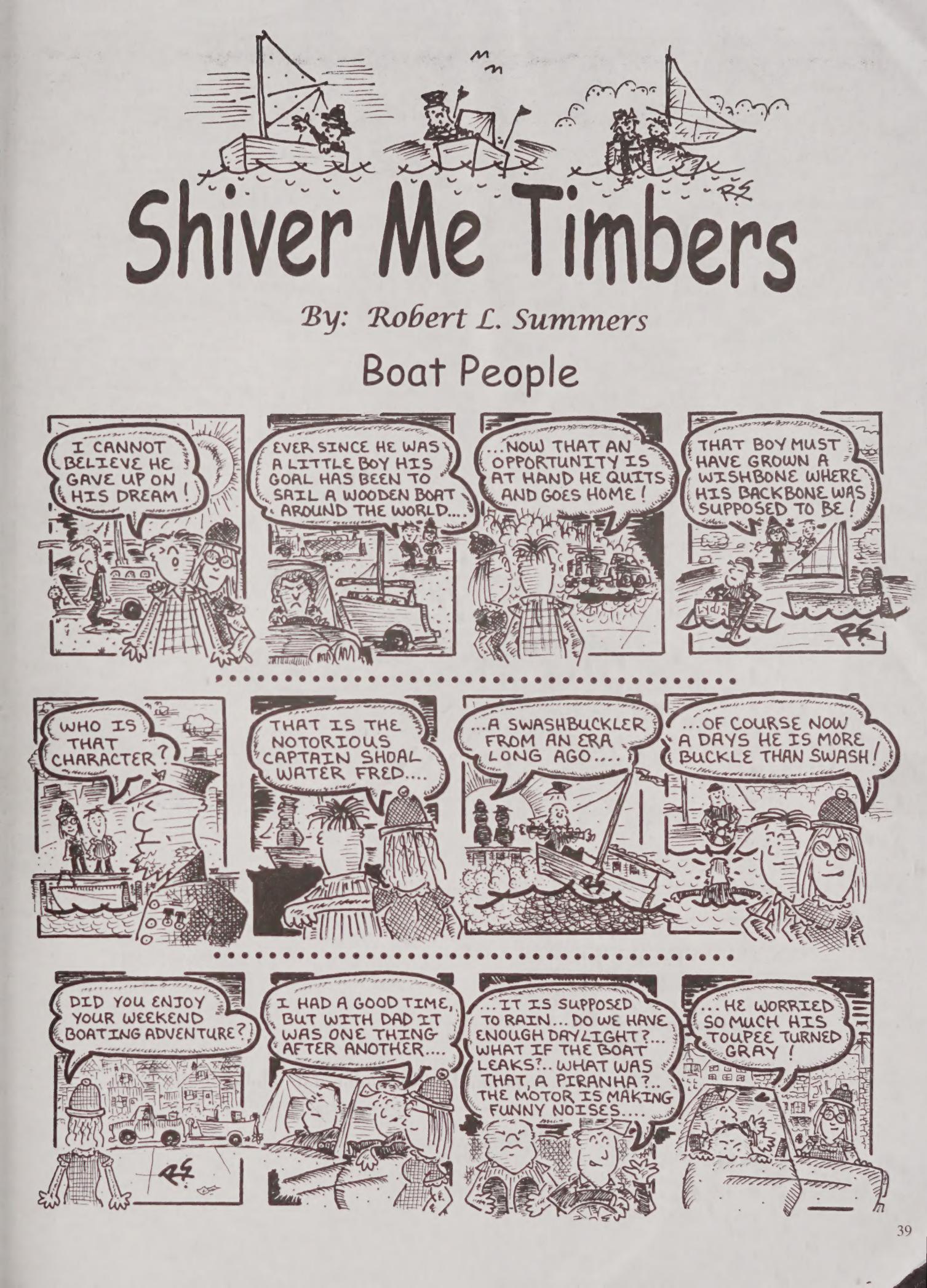


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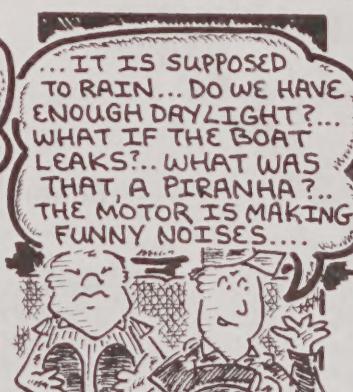
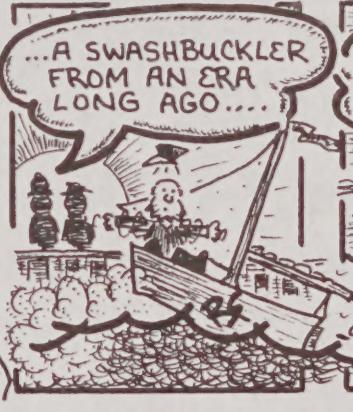
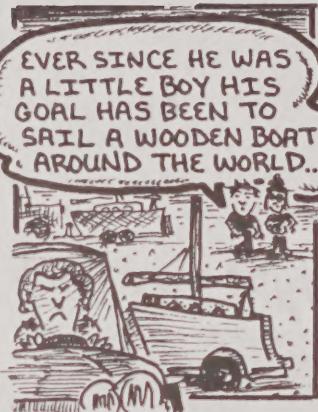
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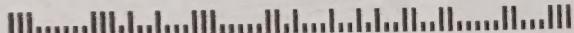
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Just enjoy and take it all in, even in the snow! Bradley Lake, Andover, N.H. Photo: Brownell

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